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ABSTRACT

The Mass Media Studies section of this collection of conference presentations contains the following 20 papers: "Media Awareness of Media Manipulation: The Use of the Term 'Spin Doctor'" (James W. Tankard, Jr. and Randy Sumpter); "Prime Time Network TV Sex as a Counterprogramming Strategy during the 1992 Winter Olympics: An Analysis of Content and Ratings" (Dennis T. Lowry and Jon A. Shidler); "Putting News into Context: Apparent Reality Versus Source Credibility in Judgments of News Believability" (Erica Weintraub Austin and Qingwen Dong); "Assessing U.S. Television's Media Imperialism: An Exercise in Theory-Building" (Larry S. Elliott); "Media Coverage of Social Protest: An Examination of Media Hegemony" (Jane R. Ballinger); "Newscasts as Property: Will the Cable Television Act of 1992 Stimulate Production of More Local Television News?" (Lorna Veraldi); "Unintended Effect: Persuasion by the Graphic Presentation of Public Opinion Poll Results" (Barry A. Hollander); "Development of Parasocial Interaction as a Function of Repeated Viewing of a Television Program" (Philip J. Auter and Philip Palmgreen); "Media Coverage of Ethical Misconduct in Congress and Its Effect on Formal Ethical Inquiries: A Preliminary Analysis" (Cynthia King Jablonski); "Connecting Media Use with Causal Attribution" (Kuang-yu Stacy Huang); "Support for Media and Personal Expressive Rights: Development of Parallel Scales" (Julie L. Andsager); "A Multiattribute Attitude Model as a Descriptive and Diagnostic Tool for Media Managers" (J. Frederick-Collins and Xinshu Zhao); "Questions vs. Answers in the 1992 Presidential Debates: A Content Analysis of Interviewing Styles" (Carolyn B. Miller); "Community Integration and Media Use: A New Epoch Requires a New View" (Gregg A. Payne); "Structures of News, Structures of Discourse: Reappraising Discourse Analysis and Its Implications for News Studies" (Shujen Wang); "Media Agenda Setting and the United States Supreme Court's Civil Liberties Docket, 1981-1990" (Melinda J. Fancher); "Religion and Trust in News from the Mass Media" (Judith M. Buddenbaum); "The War on Drugs: A Constructionist View" (Michael P. McCauley and Edward R. Frederick); "Deviates Defoliated: Lesbians and Gay Men Break into Mainstream Publicity, 1969" (Howard Voland); and "An Experimental Test of the Agenda-Setting Function of the Press" (Wolfgang Eichhorn). (RS)

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Media Awareness of Media Manipulation: The Use of the Term "Spin Doctor"

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A paper presented to the Mass Communication and Society Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication at its annual convention in Kansas City, Missouri, August, 1993.

Media Awareness of Media Manipulation:
The Use of the Term "Spin Doctor"

The widespread use of terms such as "spin doctor," "sound bite," and "photo opportunity" in newspapers, magazines, and broadcast media indicates a growing tendency for the mass media to report and comment on how the mass media work. These phrases point out, to some extent, the "behind the scenes" structure, power, and operations of the media — and, in particular, how other agencies in society try to manipulate the media. Use of all three terms suggests a new level of awareness and acknowledgment within the press of attempts to manipulate the press.

These terms reflect in part the struggle by sources of the news to determine the frames that will be used in news stories — the organizing structures that determine how events will be looked at and interpreted.[1] This struggle is typically out of sight of the public, and this is what makes it particularly important for the news media to bring attention to it — if only through the catch phrases of spin doctor, sound bite, and photo opportunity.

Turow has complained that researchers have virtually ignored the role of public relations in structuring everyday news about governments, corporations, and the shifting fashions of life.[2] While researchers have paid a great deal of attention to the process of sensemaking by journalists when they "construct" the news, as Turow notes, they have not paid as much attention to how sources with vested interests contribute to this process of constructing the news.

This study focuses on mass media use of the term "spin doctor" as an outcropping of this tendency for the mass media to draw attention to, and comment on, behind-the-scene efforts to manipulate media content.

The purpose of this study is to look at how the spin doctors, who are attempting to set the news frames for other issues, are themselves framed by the mass media. The study examines the ways the term "spin doctor" has been used in the mass media (since its first appearance in 1984). Who uses the term? How do they use it? Who is involved in spin control? To what extent is the press involved in pointing out its own manipulation when it uses the term spin control?

Background on the Term

Spin doctors engage in spin control. Spin control is the process of providing certain interpretations of events in the hopes that journalists will use them and the public will accept them. It is a technique for manipulating the media to get across certain slants on issues or events. In many ways, spin control is a synonym for media manipulation and spin doctor is a synonym for media manipulator.

The term was apparently first used in an editorial in The New York Times on Oct. 21, 1984, commenting on the Reagan-Mondale televised debates.[3] The spin doctors referred to were senior advisers to the candidates who appear in the press room after a debate to express opinions to reporters about how the candidates did. The term was largely used in a pejorative way. The thrust of the editorial was that the media are resistant to the effects of the spin doctors. One of the goals of the present study will be to see how this usage might have changed over time.

Related Studies

The extent of public relations influence on news content is indicated by Blyskal and Blyskal, who estimate that half of a newspaper's contents is initiated by a press release or by a PR practitioner giving a story tip to a journalist.[4] Similarly, Turk found that about half of the news releases and informational handouts provided by six state agencies in Louisiana were used by newspapers.[5] She also discovered that the agendas of issues in newspaper stories which used information from state agencies reflected the issue agendas and priorities of those agencies.

As noted above, Turow has called for more research on "the influence of the public relations industry on the news process."[6] Turow suggested that researchers interested in journalistic thinking need to look more at "how the multileveled work of public relations practitioners affects reporters' constructions of reality."[7] Turow also emphasized "the importance of encouraging journalists and other media practitioners to make audiences aware of the PR agendas and vested interests that may lie behind media works and sources."[8]

Bishop conducted a study that provides some information on the prevalence of discussion of public relations activities in the press.[9] He conducted a search for PR-related terms in 16,000 news stories in three daily newspapers by using the DataTimes database.

He found no mentions of the terms public relations, press relations, public information, government information, or press officer. The term PR occurred only three times. This study would suggest some reluctance on the part of newspapers to report on the public relations industry, a major influence on the content of news.

Research Questions

This study attempted to investigate the following research questions:

1. What is the frequency of use of the term "spin doctor" over time?
2. Who uses the term "spin doctor" — journalists or their news sources?
3. How is it used — pejoratively or non-pejoratively?
4. Does the type of statement made about "spin doctors" — pejorative or non-pejorative — vary by kind of news?
5. Has the type of statement made about "spin doctors" — pejorative or non-pejorative — changed over time?
6. Have the activities referred to as spin doctoring changed over time?
7. Does the type of statement made about "spin doctors" — pejorative or non-pejorative — vary by kind of article?

Method

The research questions were answered through a content analysis using the Nexis file of the Lexis/Nexis information service.

First, the Nexis CURRNT and ARCHIV files were searched on the term "spin doctor" for the years 1982 through 1992 to find the frequency of use of the phrase by year. The earliest use of the term "spin doctor" appeared to be in 1984. Only a few articles appeared using the term before 1988. To answer the remaining research questions, a stratified random sample of 100 articles was drawn with 20 articles from each of five years — 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, and 1992. Duplicate articles or articles referring to the musical group "The Spin Doctors" or the prospective television show "The Spin Doctors" were replaced with another random selection.

Some articles used the phrase "spin doctor" more than once. In that case, one of the mentions of "spin doctor" from each article was randomly selected to be included in the sample.

The sample of 100 mentions of the term "spin doctor" was coded according to the following variables:

1. Source: the journalist himself or herself or a quoted news source.
2. Type of news source (if a quoted news source): government source; politician; business person; university professor or academic source; author, writer or thinker not university-affiliated.
3. Kind of medium or publication: newspaper, magazine, wire service, CNN, MacNeil-Lehrer, network newscast (ABC, CBS, NBC).
4. Kind of article: news story or feature, editorial or opinion column, other.
5. Kind of statement made about "spin doctor": pejorative, not pejorative.
6. Attitude toward spin doctors expressed in the statement: positive, neutral, negative.

7. Type of activity by spin doctor: spin doctor appears before media (in press conference, on television interview show, etc.); spin doctor talks to journalists in person but behind the scenes (visiting press room, etc.); can't tell.

8. Context: presidential election campaign, some other election campaign, not an election.

9. Category of news: politics and government, war and defense, economic activity, crime, public moral problems, public health and welfare, accidents and disasters, science and invention, education and classic arts, popular amusements, human interest, other.[10]

A pilot test (on a separate sample of 20 articles) was conducted to evaluate the variables and categories — particularly type of news source, type of news content, and kind of statement made about "spin doctor." Minor changes were made in some categories on the basis of this pilot test.

After the categories had been refined, a reliability check was conducted on another separate sample of 20 articles. Two coders working separately coded the 20 articles on the nine variables. Average agreement between the coders for the nine variables was 85%.[11]

Data were examined primarily with frequency analysis and crosstabulations. The Chi square test and the Pearson correlation coefficient were used to look for statistical association.

Results

Frequency of occurrence of the phrase "spin doctor" by year is presented in Figure 1. The growth in the use of the term is striking, with 1,553 articles appearing in 1992.

The term "spin doctor" was used by journalists themselves much more than by news sources, with 85% of the occurrences coming from journalists (see Table 1).

Most of the occurrences were in news stories or features (64%) rather than editorials or opinion columns (29%).

Statements about spin doctors were slightly more likely to be not pejorative (54%) than pejorative (46%). They were similarly slightly more likely to be neutral (53%) rather than negative (46%) or positive (1%).

The term was used 1% of the time to refer to an appearance by a spin doctor before the media, and 8% of the time to refer to a spin doctor talking to a journalist behind the scene. It was most likely to be used in such a way that no particular activity was referred to (91% of the time).

The most common context for use of the term was a non-election context (61% of the time). The term was used 23% of the time in the context of a presidential election and 16% of the time in some other election.

The most common category of news for use of the term was "politics and government" (with 59% of the mentions). The second most common news category was "economic activity" (with 10% of the mentions).

Whether the reference to the term "spin doctor" was pejorative or not was related to news category, with statements about spin doctors in stories dealing with politics and government most likely to be pejorative, while statements in stories dealing with economic activity were most likely to be non-pejorative (see Table 2).

Looking at whether references to the term "spin doctor" were pejorative or not by year showed that they were most pejorative in 1989 (when 70% were pejorative), and that they grew increasingly less pejorative with each succeeding year until 1992 (when 25% were pejorative) (see Table 3).

An examination of the activities of spin doctors by year showed a steady decrease in references to specific activities such as speaking directly before the media or speaking to journalists behind the scenes and a steady increase in general statements where no specific activity was mentioned (see Table 4).

Whether statements about spin doctors were pejorative or not was related to the kind of article, with 38% of the news stories or features containing pejorative references, while 66% of the editorials or opinion columns contained pejorative references (see Table 5).

Whether statements about spin doctors were pejorative or not was also related to the source of the statement, with 41% of the statements by journalists being pejorative, while 73% of the statements by news sources were pejorative (see Table 6).

Summary and Conclusions

The growth in the use of the term "spin doctor" over recent years has been dramatic. The Nexis search conducted in this study revealed 1,553 articles using the term in 1992.

These findings contrast with those of Bishop, who did not find many occurrences of public relations terms in newspapers. If the term "spin doctor" is considered to be related to public relations, there would seem to be a lot of attention to public relations in the mass media.

But how was the term used? This study indicates that from 1989 on, the term "spin doctor" was used less and less frequently in a pejorative way. Over the five-year period of the study, the term was also used in a less and less specific way. It tended not to refer to specific activities, but a generalized kind of "media manipulation."

If the media are disclosing their own manipulation by news sources by using the term "spin doctor," they appear to be doing it in an increasingly "toothless" way. A term that may have started out having some bite has become increasingly generalized in its meaning (until it has become a cliché) and less strong in its sense of disapproval.[12] This study suggests that "spin doctor" is being used by the media mostly as a "non-disapproving" term for media manipulation. Rather than pointing the finger at media manipulation, as the term did when it was first used, the effect has become one of trivializing media manipulation.

The initial meaning of the phrase "spin doctor" was someone from the presidential campaign who walks into press rooms and tries to tell reporters what to emphasize in their stories. Accounts from the last presidential election campaign suggest that, if anything, the activities of the spin doctors have intensified. One report states that the Bush-Quayle campaign had 12 spin doctors at the 1992 vice presidential debate, while the Perot-Stockdale and Clinton-Gore campaigns had 16 each.[13] Sources with vested interests are no longer just supplying information, they are attempting to stand behind the reporter at the typewriter and determine the way the story is going to be written.

In essence, this study indicates that journalists may be becoming more and more accepting of spin doctors. This is disturbing when you think about what spin doctors do. Essentially they try to determine the slant, angle, or frame that will be used in news reports. That would seem to be the job of the journalist and not a source with a vested interest.

One implication of this study for journalists is that they should recommit themselves to revealing spin doctors in the original sense of the term — that is, they should strive to point out news source attempts to influence the newsmaking process. In addition, they should become less dependent on these same spin doctors, and develop the ability to interpret complex events such as presidential debates for themselves and without the guidance of the spinners.

One implication for media researchers is that research dealing with such news-related topics as newsmaking and objectivity needs to acknowledge the significant role in newsmaking played by spin doctors and other sources with vested interests. It is popular now to criticize journalism for not being objective because the individual journalist cannot get rid of his or her subjectivity. But these criticisms may pale into insignificance when one considers the conscious and often successful efforts by spin doctors and others to shape the news to express their points of view.

Figure 1

Stories Using the Term "Spin Doctor" by Year
(From the CURRNT and ARCHIV Files in Nexis)

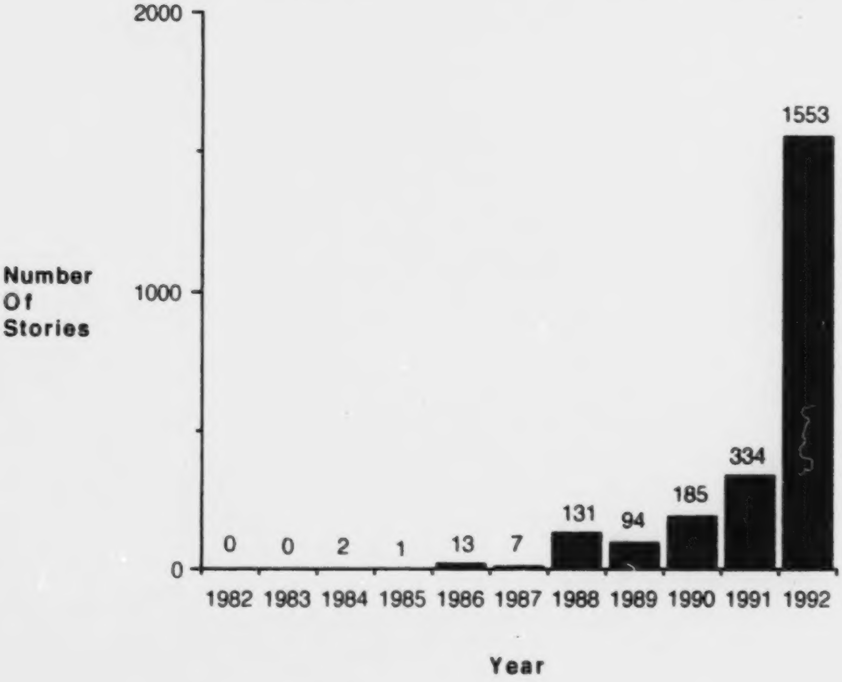

Table 1
Characteristics of Statements About Spin Doctors

	Percentage
Source of Statement	
Journalist	85
News Source	15
Kind of Medium	
Newspaper	64
Magazine	21
Wire Service	11
Cable News Network	1
Other	3
Kind of Article	
News Story or Feature	64
Editorial or Opinion Column	29
Other	7
Kind of Statement	
Pejorative	46
Not Pejorative	54
Attitude Toward Spin Doctors	
Positive	1
Neutral	53
Negative	46
Activity of Spin Doctor	
Appears Before Media	1
Talks to Journalists Behind Scenes	8
Can't Tell	91
Context of Statement	
Presidential Election	23
Other Election	16
Not an Election	61
Category of News	
Politics and government	59
War and Defense	3
Economic Activity	10
Crime	1
Public Moral Problems	4
Accidents and Disasters	1
Science and Invention	2
Popular Amusements	8
Human Interest	3
Other	9

Table 2

Kind of Statement About Spin Doctors by News Category

	Politics and Government	Economic Activity	Other
Pejorative	58%	30%	29%
Not Pejorative	42	70	71
	100%	100%	100%

Chi square = 7.83, df = 2, p < .05

Table 3

Kind of Statement About Spin Doctor By Year

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Pejorative	45%	70%	50%	40%	25%
Not Pejorative	55	30	50	60	75
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Pearson r = .20, p < .05

Table 4

Activity of Spin Doctors by Year

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Before Media or Behind Scenes	20%	15%	5%	5%	
Can't Tell	80	85	95	95	100
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Pearson r = .25, p < .05

Table 5

Kind of Statement About Spin Doctors by Kind of Article

	News Story Or Feature	Editorial Or Opinion Column	Other
Pejorative	38%	66%	43%
Not Pejorative	62	34	57
	100%	100%	100%

Chi square = 6.34, df = 2, p < .05

Table 6

Kind of Statement About Spin Doctors by Source

	Journalist	News Source
Pejorative	41%	73%
Not Pejorative	59	27
	100%	100%

Chi square = 5.31, df = 1, p < .05

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[1] James W. Tankard, Jr., Laura Hendrickson, Jackie Silberman, Kris Bliss, and Salma Ghanem, Media frames: Approaches to Conceptualization and Measurement. Paper presented to the Communication Theory and Methodology Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication convention, Boston, 1991.

[2] Joseph Turow, "Public Relations and Newswork: A Neglected Relationship," American Behavioral Scientist, 33 (1989): 206-212.

[3] William Safire, "On Language: Calling Dr. Spin," The New York Times, August 31, 1986, section 6, p. 8.

[4] Jeff Blyskal and Marie Blyskal, PR: How the Public Relations Industry Writes the News (New York: William Morrow, 1985), p. 28.

[5] Judy VanSlyke Turk, "Information Subsidies and Media Content: A Study of Public Relations Influence on the News," Journalism Monographs 100 (December 1986).

[6] Turow, "Public Relations and Newswork," p. 206.

[7] Ibid., p. 208.

[8] Ibid., p. 212.

[9] Robert L. Bishop, "What Newspapers Say About Public Relations, Public Relations Review 14 (Summer 1988): 50-51.

[10] These news categories were developed by Paul Deutschmann. See Guido H. Stempel III, "Content Patterns of Small and Metropolitan Dailies," Journalism Quarterly 39, 1 (Winter 1962): 88-90.

[11] Percentages of agreement for coding of specific variables were the following: source of statement, 96%; kind of medium, 91%; kind of article, 70%; kind of statement (pejorative or not pejorative), 74%; attitude toward spin doctors, 74%; activity of spin doctor, 87%; context, 91%; news category, 82%.

[12] The phrase appeared on the 1989 list of overused words and phrases issued annually by Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. (Julie Hinds, Gannett News Service, February 3, 1989), and Matt Groening included it in a list of forbidden words for 1993 in his "Life in Hell" cartoon (Austin Chronicle, January 13, 1993, p. 51).

[13] Leslie Phillips, "Spinning Wheel Goes Round and Round," USA Today, October 14, 1992, p. 3A.

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Prime Time Network TV Sex as a Counterprogramming Strategy During the 1992 Winter Olympics: An Analysis of Content and Ratings

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Presented at the annual convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Kansas City, Missouri, Aug. 14, 1993. Dennis T. Lowry is Professor of Journalism at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Jon A. Shidler is Assistant Professor of Journalism at the same institution. The authors are grateful to Steve Phelps for assistance in obtaining TV ratings data.

Abstract

A common assumption in the TV industry is that, "Where there's sweeps, there's sure to be sex." This study tested that assumption by conducting a content analysis of sexual behaviors in ABC, Fox and NBC prime time programs during the February 1992 sweeps period, when CBS was carrying the Winter Olympics. The random sample consisted of 19 evenings (56 hours of programs). The three networks carried 12.10 sexual behaviors per hour during the sweeps period, up slightly from 11.99 per hour during a fall 1991 non-sweeps period. An additional 5.04 sexual behaviors per hour were presented in the promos for prime time programs. Unmarried sex was the predominant type of sex, and disapprovals of unmarried sex were rare. Pregnancy, AIDS, and other STDS were seldom shown or mentioned. Correlations between sexual behaviors and ratings produced either non-significant or negative results. The study concluded that where there's sweeps, there may or may not be more sex, depending on which network one is analyzing. ABC cut its number of sexual behaviors per hour by almost half, while Fox more than doubled its rate per hour.

Network TV Sex as a Counterprogramming Strategy During a Sweeps Period: An Analysis of Content and Ratings

A common assumption in the TV industry is that, "Where there's sweeps, there's sure to be sex,"[1] and February 1992 provided a special opportunity to test this assumption. While February is traditionally a sweeps month when networks vie for maximum viewership, February 1992 was special in that CBS also carried 16 evenings of the Winter Olympics. Thus, ABC, Fox and NBC had every incentive to increase their levels of sexual content as one means of counterprogramming against the Olympics during this crucial ratings period.

"Counterprogramming is a basic strategy in which programs are scheduled to attract a target audience not being served by competitors' programs in a given daypart."[2] Traditionally, the key to counterprogramming has been to select a target audience segment least interested in a dominant program lineup and offer programming with a strong appeal to this segment. However, since the Olympics generally attract both a large and diverse audience, including non-television viewers who tune in just for the Olympic events, potential segmentation becomes difficult.

Because the United States is experiencing unprecedented epidemics of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), the subject of network TV portrayals of sex in programs, and the use of sex as a promotional device, takes on both scholarly and public health policy importance. An official task force of the American Psychological Association stated, "In this area [sex on commercial television], as in others, ongoing content analyses are needed."[3] From the public health perspective, the former Secretary of Health and Human Services said, "Today, I call upon the media to turn down the volume on irresponsible sex . . . . Too many of our youth are being raised by a TV nanny that glorifies casual sex . . . ."[4]

This study had four purposes: (1) to conduct one of the on-going content analyses called for by the American Psychological Association task force; (2) to measure the extent to which ABC, Fox and NBC used sex as a counterprogramming strategy in programs and promos against CBS during the 1992 Winter Olympics; (3) to measure the frequency with which the networks indicated any disapproval of unmarried intercourse, whether for public health, moral, or other reasons---something which apparently no other published content analysis has measured in this way before;[5] and (4) to measure the effects of sex as a promotional device upon actual program ratings.

The study of TV portrayals of sex has been of interest to communication scholars for at least a half decade before AIDS entered the picture,[6] with the most influential early communication journal article being that of Franzblau, Sprafkin and Rubinstein.[7] Subsequent content analyses have measured the frequencies and types of sexual behaviors on prime time TV[8] as well as daytime soap operas.[9]

Two different analyses of TV Guide program advertisements have demonstrated that the networks have definitely used sex as "bait" to attract viewers.[10] Lowry and Shidler[11] were apparently the first to analyze the sexual content of network TV programs and on-air TV promos within a single study. They found 9.66 sexual behaviors per hour in the fall 1991 programs (down from 10.94 in 1987) and 5.91 sexual behaviors per hour in the promos. If the average amount of promo material per hour (one minute and 45 seconds) had been adjusted to the average length of program material per hour (45 minutes and 30 seconds), then, the networks were presenting sexual behaviors in the promos at a rate more than 16 times higher per adjusted hour than in the programs.[12] Therefore, the evidence from three different empirical studies has indicated that the commercial TV networks have been using sex as one of their major viewer enticements.

The overall numbers of sexual behaviors per hour do not tell the complete story, however, and some additional context is needed. This country is in the midst of a well-known AIDS epidemic. Unknown to most people, though, is that the United States is also experiencing epidemics of other STDs, such as chlamydia (4 million cases per year), ghonorrhea (1.4 million cases per year), and genital warts (1 million cases per year).[13] All TV content analyses to date that have included marital status as one of their variables have reported that the vast majority of sexual behaviors on prime time as well as daytime network TV occur between unmarried partners.[14] At the same time that the networks have been depicting high levels of sex between unmarried partners, they have been slow to inform viewers of the possible consequences of unmarried sex---i.e., unwanted pregnancies, AIDS, and other STDs.

Network TV portrayals of sexual behaviors have been of concern to more than just a handful of communication scholars and the Secretary of Health and Human Services. The Planned Parenthood Federation of America has accused the networks of ". . . putting out an unbalanced view [about sex] which is causing more problems for teenagers and society."[15] A 1992 Gallup survey of 1,003 adults reported that 24% were offended by sexual suggestiveness on TV (an increase of 5% since 1991), and 81% said that they sometimes change channels or turn off their sets because of offensive programming.[16] A Louis Harris and Associates survey of 1,000 teens indicated that substantial percentages of teenagers ". . . believe that TV gives a realistic picture of such topics as sexually transmitted diseases (45%), pregnancy and the consequences of sex (41%), family planning to prevent pregnancy (28%), and people making love (24%)."[17] Concern about network TV portrayals of sex has also been expressed by conservative activist groups,[18] liberal activist groups,[19] the U.S. Senate,[20] media buyers,[21] and some TV sponsors.[22]

In order to determine whether any network increased its level of sexual behaviors, one would need prior non-sweeps data against which to compare the February 1992 data. The non-sweeps baseline data used in this study were from the Lowry and Shidler[23] sample from October 1991.

Since the Lowry and Shidler study found that the networks were definitely using sex as "bait" in their promos during a non-ratings period, and since ratings are even more crucial during a ratings month, it seemed logical to expect that they might increase the amount of sex during a ratings month, especially if one of the competing networks was carrying the Olympics. The three hypotheses tested in this study were that ABC, Fox and NBC would each increase the number of sexual behaviors in their programs while counterprogramming against the 1992 Winter Olympics on CBS. The fourth hypothesis was that the amount of sex in the programs would be positively correlated with Neilsen ratings. This would seem to be a working assumption of network programmers, given the extent to which they obviously use sex in the promos as a form of viewer enticement.

Method

Sample

The prime time content universe for this study began Sunday, Feb. 9, and ended Saturday, Feb. 22, 1992. Prime time was defined as 6 to 10 p.m. (CST) on Sunday, and 7 to 10 p.m. on all other evenings. Because network programing obviously changes from night to night, we randomly drew a constructed week sample for each of the three networks. Fox did not program seven nights a week; therefore, we subtracted the two evenings when the Fox affiliate carried no network programs. Our final sample consisted of 19 evenings (56 hours of programs). The sample included all network programs (N=68) and promos for future prime time programs (N=423). Product commercials were excluded, as were promos for future non-prime time programs.

Content Categories

Because this study was using the results of the Lowry and Shidler 1991 study for a quantitative baseline of sexual behaviors in a non-sweeps period, it was also necessary to use the same coding categories and definitions as used in that study. The Lowry and Shidler category system is a modified version of a system originally used by Silverman, Sprafkin and Rubinstein.[24]

Verbal suggestiveness was defined as references to sex that are one step removed from the type of direct references to intercourse described below. Included were sexual innuendos, double-entendres, organ humor (i.e., jokes about sex organs), and jokes about impotence. The following examples were included in this category: "They [my breasts] answer to another man's whistle now." "She was highly complimentary of your [sexual] performance." "What makes you think you're going to get any sleep [tonight]?" "That it [my penis] has fallen and it can't get up." "My private parts are back in private practice." "I'm a quick study [about sex] . . . with a slow trigger." The unit of analysis was the individual sentence, although it might take only one word or one phrase within a sentence to make it suggestive.

Physical suggestiveness was defined as sexually suggestive actions or sexually suggestive exposure of one's body. In contrast to Erotic Touching (defined below), which involved one character touching another, physical suggestiveness applied only when one partner was not touching another. For physical suggestiveness, the camera shot was used as the unit of analysis. This means, for example, that if five strippers were on the screen simultaneously "bumping and grinding," this counted as one instance of physical suggestiveness. But if one stripper was shown on the screen in five different camera shots, this counted as five instances. The most common instances of physical suggestion were breast shots and derriere shots--referred to in the industry as "T and A shots."

Erotic touching was defined as interpersonal touching that had clear sexual overtones; demonstrating or intending to demonstrate sexual love; arousing or expressing sexual desire. Although not every behavior that has romantic overtones has sexual overtones, the category included "heavy" kissing, sexually romantic embraces and hugs, sexual caressing or touching of any part of someone else's body, and other similar touching behaviors. It excluded casual hand-holding, an arm casually around someone's waist or shoulder, a casual "peck" type of kiss, non-sexual greeting and farewell kisses, parent-child kissing and hugging (as long as incest was not implied), and other nonsexual touching. Brief "peck" types of kisses were counted, however, when they were part of an intercourse or implied intercourse scene. When the context was ambiguous, coders used a three second rule---i.e., kisses three seconds or longer were coded as erotic and shorter kisses were not coded. An erotic kiss that also involved an embrace counted as two instances of erotic touching if both acts met the above requirements. The unit of analysis was the behavior itself, not the number of individuals involved. This last point is an important methodological distinction that produced more conservative results than some other studies. Silverman, Sprafkin and Rubinstein,[25] for example, counted a single kiss or embrace twice, once for each partner.

Heterosexual intercourse was classified as verbal, implied, or physically depicted. Verbal referred to spoken references to the act of heterosexual intercourse. Some examples were: "I slept with Victoria Stark." "The first time I had sex it was in a car." "Love me [i.e., have sex with me]." "What was the tallest woman you ever slept with?" "I didn't shack up with him." "Roses are red, you're great in bed." Implied was coded when the cameras depicted the start or end of lovemaking, but did not show the physical act itself. The most common example of implied intercourse on TV occurred when two lovers were in bed kissing and embracing, and then the cameras cut to a commercial break or a different scene. Another common situation was when the scene opened on the two lovers in bed "the morning after" a night of implied love-making. Implied intercourse scenes of this type were coded each time the scene appeared. For example, a single act of implied intercourse interrupted by a commercial break was counted twice. Thus, visual behaviors of this type were coded at the level of the scene, while verbal behaviors used sexual words or phrases within sentences as the units of analysis. Physical was reserved for actual physical portrays of intercourse, even though the actors might not be shown totally nude. The criterion was not the amount of skin that was showing but rather what the actors were portrayed as doing. Heterosexual intercourse was also classified according to whether the partners were married, unmarried, or of unclear marital status.

The remaining categories were prostitution, aggressive sexual contact (including rape), homosexuality, incest, exhibitionism, masturbation, transvestism and transsexualism, voyeurism, other unnatural sexual behavior, pregnancy prevention, and disease prevention. Each of these categories was subdivided into verbal, implied and physical. The units of analysis for these categories were the same as those used above. It is important to point out that no double coding was used for categories that overlap with heterosexual intercourse. For example, prostitution was coded only under prostitution, not double-coded under prostitution and heterosexual intercourse. Rape was coded under aggressive sexual contact, not double-coded under rape and heterosexual intercourse. Pregnancy prevention and disease prevention, on the other hand, were double-coded with intercourse in those relatively few instances when these behaviors were shown in conjunction with intercourse.

Two additional categories, HIV/AIDS contracted and other STDs contracted, were subdivided into verbal, implied, and infected person on screen. Sexually-related words or signs appearing on the screen were coded as verbal references, since words and not physical acts were shown.

Disapproval of sexual behavior. Even casual observation of network programing reveals that almost all instances of sexual behavior occur within either a positive context (as indicated by laugh tracks and jokes) or at least within a neutral context (i.e., the sexual behaviors "just happen" and neither approval nor disapproval is expressed). Occasionally, however, participants state that the sexual behavior that did occur was wrong, or that any future sexual behavior would be wrong. These negative views could stem from public health, moral, or other reasons. Examples: "I think that every time you have sex you're risking your life, because I don't think it's worth it." "This isn't right." "It's all wrong." All such verbal statements of disapproval were coded in this category.

Coding was done independently by the authors. A random subsample of seven evenings was coded by both coders to determine intercoder reliability. Agreement was checked on the smallest practical unit of analysis (not based on totals at the end of a scene or program) to make the reliability testing as rigorous as possible. Often this was a single word or a single kiss. Extended love-making scenes were usually subdivided into shorter units (e.g., ten or twenty seconds long) for coding and agreement checking.[26] These coding methods resulted in an overall proportion of agreement of .91. The proportion of agreement on the most-used categories was: verbal and physical suggestiveness, .82; erotic touching, .93; and heterosexual intercourse, .95. Disapproval, a new variable in this study, was not one of the most-used variables but had an intercoder agreement of .88. In cases where we disagreed in our frequency scores for a given behavior or scene, the mean of the two scores was used for data analysis purposes.

Results

As Table 1 indicates, the total number of codable sexual behaviors in the 56 hours of programs was 678.5, producing an hourly rate of 12.12. This compares with 11.99 per hour for the same networks during the fall 1991 non-sweeps period. Therefore there was no significant (t = .10, df = 16, p = .46) overall change in the hourly rate of sexual behaviors during the sweeps period. The promos, on the other hand, showed a small decrease---from 5.53 sexual behaviors per hour in the non-sweeps period to 5.04 per hour in February 1992.

Just as past studies have found, Table 1 also indicates that the vast majority of sexual behaviors on network TV occurred between unmarried partners. Stated differently, unmarried sex was the norm, not the exception, in terms of the images presented to viewers. As was also the case in past studies, pregnancy prevention and STD prevention received only slight emphasis, in relation to the overall numbers of sexual behaviors. Erotic touching dropped from 2.95 to 1.62 behaviors per hour, but this drop was compensated for by small increases in other categories.

Even though unprotected unmarried sex is common on prime time TV, individuals seldom contract AIDS or other STDs. There were a total of 14 verbal references indicating that someone had contracted AIDS (13 of which were on ABC), and one verbal reference to someone contracting some other STD (also on ABC). Of the total of five people with AIDS shown on screen, all were on ABC.

The results for the individual networks (Table 2) present a mixed picture. Contrary to the hypothesis, ABC not only did not increase the amount of sexual content during the sweeps period, it reduced its hourly rate by almost half, from 20.82 to 10.82. ABC hourly program rates dropped from 13.34 to 8.02, and promo rates dropped from 7.48 to 2.80. Fox, on the other hand, more than doubled its overall hourly rate from 12.40 in the non-sweeps period to 28.34 during the sweeps period, therefore supporting the hypothesis ($t = 2.40$, $df = 7$, $p < .03$). Hourly program rates increased from 10.30 to 23.71, and promo rates increased from 2.10 to 4.63. The overall NBC data showed no significant change ($t = .27$, $df = 14$, $p = .39$), and thus did not support the hypothesis, even though the hourly promo rates increased from 5.11 to 7.50.

This study found a total of 16 statements of verbal disapproval (.29 per hour). By way of comparison, the combined scores for Intercourse/Unmarried, Intercourse/Unclear Status, Prostitution, Homosexuality, and Incest came to 267.5 (4.78 per hour). Thus the disapproval/absence-of-disapproval ratio for unmarried sex was 1:16.48---i.e., one instance of disapproval for every 16.48 instances of unmarried sex presented in a favorable or neutral light.

The fourth hypothesis of this study predicted that the amount of sex in the programs would be positively correlated with each program's Neilsen rating. This hypothesis was definitely not supported by the data. We correlated sexual behaviors in specific programs with the rating of each specific program, as well as with the season average for each program. None of the correlations for ABC or Fox was significant at the .05 level, nor was the correlation between sexual behaviors and specific program rating on NBC. There was a negative correlation ($r = -.561$, $p < .01$) between sexual behaviors and season average rating of specific programs on NBC.

Discussion

Based upon the results of this study, the assumption of Jarvis referred to at the beginning of this article---"Where there's sweeps, there's sure to be sex"[27]---is wrong, at least as an unqualified generalization. While there is always a certain amount of sexual content on prime time network TV, the clear implication of this assumption is that there is more sexual content during a sweeps period than during a non-sweeps period.

While the assumption was incorrect as a generalization, it was correct, however, with regard to the Fox network, given that Fox more than doubled its hourly rates of sexual behaviors. While we cannot address the reasons in the minds of the programmers at Fox for this increase, it is certainly legitimate to conclude that their actions were consistent with with a sex-as-counterprogramming hypothesis. A different sweeps period could of course produce different results, and this is why the American Psychological Association task force has recommended continuing content analyses of sex on commercial TV.

Implicit in the assumption that "Where there's sweeps, there's sure to be sex" is a second assumption---namely, that increasing the amount of sex in programs and in promos will improve program ratings. This implicit assumption was not supported by the data in this study. The use of sex in programs and promos was not positively correlated with ratings, and therefore did not appear to be an effective counterprogramming strategy. The Gallup survey referred to above indicated that the amount of sex on TV is definitely driving some viewers away. On the other hand, it is possible that some viewers---especially younger viewers---are attracted to certain TV programs because of the sexual content. The Gallup survey did not ask this question, but it would be worth asking it in future surveys in order to determine the net effects of sex on TV viewing.

Some observers believe that all television is educational television---in the sense that all television communicates values, world views, and approaches to social interaction. Greenberg, Lisangan and Soderman state, "Scenes on television also express values."[28] DeFleur, in the context of his cultural norms theory, has stated that ". . . the mass media, through selective presentations and emphasis of certain themes, create impressions among their audiences . . ."[29] of common cultural norms. From the perspective of cultivation theory, Gerbner and Gross have argued: "Entertainment is the most broadly effective educational fare in any culture."[30]

As this study and all prior content analyses have indicated, the selective presentations and emphases of network TV have continued to present unmarried sex as the norm. Married sex is the exception. If DeFleur's theory is correct, then our finding of one instance of disapproval for every 16.48 instances of unmarried sex reinforces the notion that unmarried sex is the cultural norm and is socially approved. If we had found the opposite---16.48 disapprovals for every one instance of unmarried sex---this would obviously be emphasizing an entirely different theme to viewers. This finding also seems to support the Planned Parenthood accusation referred to above that the networks are ". . . putting out an unbalanced view . . ."[31] about sex.

What are the effects of this unbalanced view? This particular question of the ratio of approvals to disapprovals could be investigated in future experimental studies. Greenberg, Linsangan and Soderman[32] conducted a controlled experiment on high school students using segments from actual prime time TV and soap operas. One experimental videotape contained portrayals of prostitution and married intercourse, while a second videotape contained portrayals of homosexuality and unmarried intercourse. Subjects then filled out questionnaires indicating both their knowledge and beliefs about prostitution, homosexuality, unmarried intercourse, and married intercourse. A similar design could be used to test the effects of 1:16 and 16:1 ratios of approvals to disapprovals.

An additional worthwhile topic for future research is the relationship between sex and violence as counterprogramming strategies during ratings periods. For example, while ABC was reducing its hourly rates of sexual behaviors, did it perhaps substitute an increased amount of violence to compete against the Winter Olympics? Did

Fox perhaps increase both sex and violence? Future studies might profitably analyze both sex and violence.

As past content analyses have also indicated, the rates of behaviors relating to pregnancy prevention and STD prevention were proportionately low. It is interesting to note in Table 1, though, that all three scores were slightly higher than in October 1991. ABC not only reduced its rates of sexual behaviors, it was the one network that gave some attention to AIDS and other STDs. It will take future monitoring studies to determine whether this is the beginning of a network trend.

The findings of this study, as well as those of Lowry and Shidler,[33] suggest that almost all prior content analyses of sex on TV have been significantly under reporting the total amount of sexual content actually present. To analyze the sexual content only in the programs and to ignore the sexual content in the promos, as most studies have done, is to under report the total amount of sex on TV by more than one third. We believe it is important for future content analyses of sex on TV to include sex in the promos as well as in the programs.

In addition to suggesting several implications for future research from the scholarly or public health perspective, this study also has practical implications for future programming strategy on the part of network executives. Most TV sex content analysis studies in the past have ignored the correlation between sex and actual program ratings. The results of this study found that sexual content was in fact not positively correlated with program ratings. Network executives may want to replicate this study on a larger scale and, if similar findings are obtained, then modify their programs accordingly.

TABLE 1
Rate of Sexual Behaviors Per Hour in Non-Sweeps vs. Sweeps Samples of Prime Time TV (Three Networks)

	October '91 (Non-Sweeps)		February '92 (Sweeps and Olympics)	
	Programs	Promos	Programs	Promos
Suggestiveness				
Verbal	2.72	.23	2.99	.65
Physical	.59	.44	1.06	.69
Erotic touching				
Married	.56	.14	.38	- -
Unmarried	2.39	1.78	1.24	1.71
Unclear status	--	.08	- -	.29
Subtotal	(2.95)	(2.00)	(1.62)	(2.00)
Heterosexual intercourse				
Married/verbal	.49	.02	.85	.14
Married/implied	.13	.03	.04	- -
Married/physical	--	--	- -	- -
Unmarried/verbal	2.91	.91	2.88	.55
Unmarried/implied	.49	.81	.09	.47
Unmarried/physical	.07	–	- -	- -
Unclear status/verbal	.09	–	.05	.01
Unclear status/implied	- -	- -	- -	.09
Subtotal	(4.18)	(1.77)	(3.91)	(1.26)
Other sexual behaviors				
Prostitution	.42	.26	.13	- -
Aggressive sexual contact	.02	.19	.79	.13
Homosexuality	.19	.28	.22	- -
All other sexual behaviors	.49	.11	.46	.11
Subtotal	(1.12)	(.84)	(1.60)	(.24)
Pregnancy prevention	.18	–	.21	- -
STD Prevention	.21	.03	.48	.09
HIV/AIDS contracted	.04	.22	.23	.11
Other STDs contracted	--	--	.02	- -
Total, all behaviors	11.99 (N=647.5)	5.53 (N=298.0)	12.12 (N=678.5)	5.04 (N=282.0)

TABLE 2

Rate of Sexual Behaviors Per Hour in Non-Sweeps vs. Sweeps Samples of Individual Networks

	October '91 (Non-Sweeps)			February '92 (Sweeps and Olympics)		
	Programs	Promos	Total	Programs	Promos	Total
ABC	13.34	7.48	20.82	8.02	2.80	10.82
Fox	10.30	2.10	12.40	23.71	4.63	28.34
NBC	11.41	5.11	16.52	9.89	7.50	17.39

Footnotes

[1] Jeff Jarvis, "Staking Out Sweeps: A Quick Preview of What's in Store During TV's Crucial Ratings Month," TV Guide, Feb. 1, 1992, pp. 10-11, at p. 11.

[2] Susan Tyler Eastman and Robert A. Klein, Promotion and Marketing for Broadcasting and Cable (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1991), p. 212

[3] Aletha C. Huston, Edward Donnerstein, Halford Fairchild, Norma D. Feshback, Phyllis A. Katz, John P. Murray, Eli A. Rubenstein, Brian L. Wilcox, and Diana Zukerman, Big World, Small Screen: The Role of Television in American Society (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), p. 47.

[4] Louis W. Sullivan, text of a speech delivered to the 21st Century Commission on African-American Males, Washington, D.C., May 24, 1991, p. 11.

[5] While this manuscript was in its final stages of revision a TV content analysis was published which contained attitude-toward-sex-act measures (positive, negative or not relevant/unknown). Cf. Bradley S. Greenberg, Cynthia Stanley, Michelle Siemicki, Carrie Heeter, Anne Soderman, and Renato Linsangan, "Sex Content on Soaps and Prime-Time Television Series Most Viewed by Adolescents," in Bradley S. Greenberg, Jane D. Brown, and Nancy L. Buerkel-Rothfus (Eds.), Media, Sex and the Adolescent (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1993), pp. 29-44. Since the authors provided neither an operational definition nor examples of "negative" attitudes in either the study itself or in its accompanying coding manual, we were unable to determine whether their negative category was equivalent to the disapproval category used in this study. The data they provide suggest that it was probably not an equivalent category.

[6] Susan Franzblau, Joyce N. Sprafkin and Eli A. Rubinstein, A Content Analysis of Physical Intimacy on Television (Stony Brook, NY: Brookdale International Institute,

1976).

[7] Susan Franzblau, Joyce N. Sprafkin and Eli A. Rubinstein, "Sex on TV: A Content Analysis," Journal of Communication, 27:164-170 (Spring 1977).

[8] L. Theresa Silverman, Joyce N. Sprafkin and Eli A. Rubinstein, "Physical Contact and Sexual Behavior on Prime-Time TV," Journal of Communication, 29:33-43 (Winter 1979); Bradley S. Greenberg, David Graef, Carlos Fernandez-Collado, Felipe Korzenny and Charles K. Atkin, "Sexual Intimacy on Commercial TV During Prime Time," Journalism Quarterly, 57:211-215 (Summer 1980); Dennis T. Lowry and David E. Towles, "Prime Time TV Portrayals of Sex, Contraception and Venereal Diseases," Journalism Quarterly, 66:347-352 (Summer 1989); Barry S. Sapolsky and Joseph O. Tabarlet, "Sex in Primetime Television: 1979 Versus 1989," Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 35:505-516 (Fall 1991).

[9] Bradley S. Greenberg, Robert Abelman and Kimberly Neuendorf, "Sex on the Soap Operas: Afternoon Delight," Journal of Communication, 31:83-89 (Summer 1981); Dennis T. Lowry, Gail Love and Malcolm Kirby, "Sex on the Soap Operas: Patterns of Intimacy," Journal of Communication, 31:90-96 (Summer 1981); Bradley S. Greenberg and Dave D'Alessio, "Quantity and Quality of Sex in the Soaps," Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 29:309-321 (Summer 1985); Dennis T. Lowry and David E. Towles, "Soap Opera Portrayals of Sex, Contraception and Sexually Transmitted Diseases," Journal of Communication, 39:76-83 (Spring 1989).

[10] Lawrence C. Soley and Leonard N. Reid, "Baiting Viewers: Violence and Sex in Television Program Advertisements," Journalism Quarterly, 62:105-110, 131 (Spring 1985); Gilbert A. Williams, "Enticing Viewers: Sex and Violence in TV Guide Program Advertisements," Journalism Quarterly, 66:970-973 (Winter 1989). See also Donald M. Davis and James R. Walker, "Sex, Violence and Network Program

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Promotion: A Content Analysis," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Atlanta, Nov. 1991.

[11] Dennis T. Lowry and Jon A. Shidler, "Prime Time TV Portrayals of Sex, 'Safe Sex' and AIDS: A Longitudinal Analysis," Journalism Quarterly (in press).

[12] Ibid.

[13] Geoffrey Cowley with Mary Hager, "Sleeping with the Enemy," Newsweek, Dec. 9, 1991, pp. 58-59.

[14] E.g., Lowry, Love and Kirby, op cit.; Greenberg and D'Alessio, op cit.; Lowry and Towles, "Prime Time TV Portrayals . . . ," op cit.; Sapolsky and Tabarlet, op cit.

[15] Planned Parenthood Federation of America, "They Did it 9,000 Times on Television Last Year," The Washington Post, Nov. 25, 1986, p. A18.

[16] The Gallup Organization, The Family Channel's Gallup Survey of America's TV Viewing Habits, July, 1992, at p. D3.

[17] Louis Harris and Associates, "American Teens Speak: Sex, Myths, TV, and Birth Control," poll conducted for The Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc., Sept.-Oct., 1986, at p. 48.

[18] Donald E. Wildmon, "Normal Lear Says You Are Full of Bluster!" letter, n.d., 1991.

[19] Arthur J. Kropp, "An Open Letter to . . . Studio and TV C.E.O.S," Daily Variety, March 12, 1991.

[20] "Senate Tells Fifth Estate to Clean up its Act," Broadcasting, June 5, 1989, pp. 27-28.

[21] Jon Krampner, "Nothing to Watch," Advertising Age, May 13, 1991, pp. S28-S29.

[22] Wayne Walley, "Advertisers 'up in Arms'," Advertising Age, Mar. 27, 1989, pp. 1, 68.

[23] Lowry and Shidler, op cit.

[24] L.Theresa Silverman, Joyce S. Sprafkin and Eli A. Rubinstein, Sex on Television: A Content Analysis of the 1977-78 Prime-Time Programs (Stony Brook, NY: Brookdale International Institute, Sept., 1978).

[25] Ibid.

[26] A copy of the complete coding manual is available from the authors.

[27] Jarvis, op cit., p. 11.

[28] Bradley S. Greenberg, Renato Linsangan, and Anne Soderman, "Adolescents' Reactions to Television Sex," in Bradley S. Greenberg, Jane D. Brown and Nancy L. Buerkel-Rothfus (Eds.), Media, Sex and the Adolescent (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1993), pp. 196-224, at p. 197.

[29] Melvin DeFleur, Theories of Mass Communication, 2nd ed. (New York: David McKay, 1970), p. 129, emphasis added.

[30] George Gerbner and Larry Gross, "Living with Television: The Violence Profile," Journal of Communication, 26:173-199 (Spring 1976), at p. 177.

[31] Planned Parenthood, op cit., p. A18.

[32] Greenberg, Linsangan and Soderman, op cit.

[33] Lowry and Shidler, op cit.

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Putting News Into Context:
Apparent Reality Versus Source Credibility In Judgments of News Believability

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Running Head: Credibility and Apparent Reality

Putting News Into Context:
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ABSTRACT

A between-groups 3 x 3 factorial experiment (N=516) tests effects of message type and source reputation on judgments of credibility (judgments about the source) and assessments of apparent reality (judgments about the message content). Credibility judgments and apparent reality assessments are found to be more reliable as three combined, rather than parallel, indices. The three indices comprise judgments of 1) source truthfulness and message accuracy; 2) source expertise and message representativeness; and 3) source bias and personal perspective. The results show a message effect for judgments but no source effect and no interaction between source and message. It is concluded that at least some publics base judgments of news believability more on judgments of the apparent reality of message content rather than the credibility of the media source.

Putting News Into Context:
Apparent Reality Versus Source Credibility
In Judgments of News Believability

The process of reality testing is important to the understanding of nonfictional communication. To evaluate often-conflicting messages about probable causes, appropriate cures, and the context for various issues, an individual often needs to compare and contrast social constructions of reality with information from the media to determine the extent to which facts and interpretations seen, read and heard represent the way things "really are."

Most researchers into media effects now assume an active, rational viewer constantly adapting and accommodating to change in the social world by making judgments about social reality and media portrayals. This decision-making process makes use of previous experiences, personal dispositions, and their environment (Bandura, 1986, O'Keefe & Reid-Nash, 1987). According to social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), for example, individuals are more likely to put modeled behavior into practice in their own lives if they view what they have seen modeled or advocated in the media as realistic, justified and rewarded (Bandura, 1986). As a result, an individual watching the news to make decisions about real-world people and issue--for example, whether to vote for a particular candidate or support a particular issue--will be making what are essentially judgments of perceived realism regarding the news.

Yet perceived realism has not been applied to the realm of nonfiction or news because news, by definition, is "real." Reality testing of the news has been conceptualized by researchers as an issue of credibility, referring to the degree to which an individual perceives the media source portrays the real world truthfully, rather than of perceived realism, the degree to which an individual believes that a reality portrayed in a message on television matches the true world.

Credibility is not quite the nonfictional counterpart to the study of perceived realism regarding fiction, because credibility focuses on the sources of information (Gunther, 1992; Hovland & Weiss, 1951), rather than on the information itself, even though credibility studies have increasingly focused on credibility as "a response to specific content" rather than as a more generalized dispositional trait (e.g., Gunther, 1992, p. 147). According to Gunther and Lasorsa (1988; Gunther & Lasorsa, 1986), the concept of credibility includes judgments both about the media's expertise in covering a topic and about the media's biases in covering the topic. But a viewer may think a news story errs even if the source is perceived as an unbiased expert, because the source may not have had the time to delve more deeply into a story or may not have had access to information the viewer believes important. As a result, viewers, who tend to believe they know what makes good journalism (Izard, 1985), must weigh other factors besides the credibility of the source to evaluate the material.

We can call these message-related evaluations "apparent reality assessments (ARA)," defined as the degree to which an individual believes media portrayals of issues or people reflect reality. This conceptualization assumes that an individual can analyze the content and context of media messages, from cartoons to on-the-scene news events, for aspects of nonfiction reality. Even a clearly fantastic cartoon nevertheless can deal with real-life issues and events.

Many parallels exist in the research on credibility and perceived realism, even though perceived realism focuses on fictional messages and credibility focuses on nonfiction sources. These parallels can guide our conceptualization of the apparent reality assessment, which focuses on the hybrid of perceived realism and credibility: the nonfictional message.

Both credibility and perceived realism studies, for example, show judgments to be multidimensional and highly situational (Chaffee, 1982; Elliott, Rudd & Good, 1983; Potter, 1986; Gunther, 1988; Berlo, Lemert & Mertz, 1969). In addition, researchers in each area have found that both relational factors (such as trustworthiness or liking) and dispositional factors (such as incredulity toward or dependence on the media) influence judgments. In terms of situational factors, knowledge or real-life experience has been shown to affect both credibility and perceived realism judgments (Cozzens & Contractor, 1987; Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953; Brown, Austin & Roberts, 1988). In the realm of dispositional factors, the viewer's general level of incredulity and cognitive sophistication affects judgments of media trustworthiness and perceptions of realism (Edelstein & Tefft, 1974; Dorr, 1983). In addition, an individual's perspective on issues--hinging on personal values and expectations--affects judgments of objectivity (Gunther, 1988; Mason & Nass, 1989), while cultural differences affect judgments of social and perceived reality (DeFleur & DeFleur, 1967; Greenberg, 1972; Greenberg & Reeves, 1976; Donohue & Donohue, 1977).

A conceptualization of the apparent reality assessment

These many parallels between perceived realism and credibility suggest that conceptualization of the apparent reality assessment should be multidimensional, focusing on dimensions we might call accuracy, representativeness, and personal perspective. Representativeness refers to the extent to which an individual perceives there exist other important aspects than the media portray about an individual or issue, paralleling the construct of expertise (Hovland, et al., 1953) in credibility and of social expectations, plausibility or utility (Hawkins, 1977; Potter, 1992) in perceived realism. Accuracy refers to the extent to which the media portray an individual or issue as it really is, paralleling truthfulness (Gunther & Lasorsa, 1986) in credibility and magic window (Hawkins, 1977; Potter, 1992) in perceived realism. Personal perspective refers to the extent to which an individual perceives that the media place the appropriate emphasis on an issue or individual in the news (in other words, the match between one's own perspective of social reality and one's perception of the media's perspective), paralleling the evaluations of bias (Hovland, et al., 1953; Vallone, Ross & Lepper, 1985), issue importance (Gunther & Lasorsa, 1986), involvement (Gunther, 1988) and controversiality (Roberts & Leifer, 1975) in the credibility and political communication literatures and of identification and liking (Potter, 1992) for perceived realism judgments.

With so many parallels, "apparent reality" might seem almost indistinguishable from credibility and perceived realism, and its usefulness as a construct depends on its explanatory distinctiveness. Yet the conceptualization of the apparent reality assessment--the degree to which an individual perceives media portrayals reflect reality--distinguishes cognitions about nonfiction media messages from cognitions about nonfiction media sources, whether those cognitions about the source are generalized or message-specific. This distinction makes it possible to study the "perceived realism" of nonfiction, without presuming that the information is at all imaginary. Further, a construct that focuses on the analysis of nonfictional content, rather than its media source, also can make it possible to examine skepticism toward the news separate from cynicism toward media institutions. It should be possible, therefore, to believe a source highly credible but a message nevertheless quite unbelievable. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Apparent reality assessments and credibility judgments will factor into separate constructs and exhibit higher reliability as separate constructs.

If credibility is a highly prized property of the source (Gunther, 1992), then specific stories appearing in media sources with lesser reputations for responsible journalism, such as the _Star_ or the _National Enquirer_, should receive more negative credibility judgments than the same story appearing in a source such as the _New York Times_ or the _Wall Street Journal_.

H2: There will be a main effect for source on the credibility judgments of specific messages, such that a more reputable source will be evaluated more positively.

Similarly, if skepticism is a situational response, originating from an individual's involvement with issues and groups (Gunther, 1992), then evaluations of the apparent reality of message content should be related to an individual's personal experiences, habituation, and natural skepticism (Cozzens & Contractor, 1987). Thus, innocuous messages--messages that present no unusual information that would be dissonant from one's previous experiences--should be evaluated more positively than ambiguous or sensationalistic stories. As Gunther (1992) has proposed, important components to a trusting or skeptical response will not exist until an individual has something to be trusting or skeptical about.

H3: There will be a main effect for message on the ARA/credibility judgments of specific messages, such that a more innocuous message will be evaluated more positively.

Because the ability to make both credibility and perceived realism judgments depends on an individual's available knowledge and predispositions against which new information can be compared (Austin, Roberts & Nass, 1990; Brown, Austin & Roberts, 1988; Edelstein & Tefft, 1974; Dorr, 1983) however, neither credibility nor apparent reality alone should be expected to explain evaluations of specific messages appearing in specific sources. In the case of an ambiguous message, for example, an individual would be expected to draw on other available knowledge--such as reputation of the source--to evaluate the information and to come to a conclusion about the message content. According to the distance hypothesis (Brown, Austin & Roberts, 1988), individuals will be more skeptical if they have more personal experience with which to contrast information received from the media. With less personal experience with the message content, they would be expected to rely on their personal experience with the message source to make an evaluation.

H4: In the case of an ambiguous message, the source will have a significant effect on apparent reality assessments, such that a more reputable source will predict a more positive assessment.

Similarly, if an individual is faced with a source whose reputation for truthfulness, expertise and bias is unknown, the individual will need to draw more on information about the message content to make a judgment about the source of the information.

H5: In the case of an ambiguous source, the message will have a significant effect on credibility judgments, such that a more innocuous message will predict a more positive credibility judgment.

Finally, because judgments are expected to be both dispositional (Brown, Austin & Roberts, 1988; Edelstein & Tefft, 1974; Dorr, 1983; DeFleur & DeFleur, 1967; Greenberg, 1972; Greenberg & Reeves, 1976; Donohue & Donohue, 1977) and situational (Cozzens & Contractor, 1987; Hovland, Janis & Kelley, 1953; Gunther, 1988; Gunther, 1992; Mason & Nass, 1989), it is hypothesized that the effects of source and message type will hold when dispositional controls, such as overall skepticism toward news messages, cynicism toward media institutions, expectations about the quality of reporting, and habits of news media use are added.

H6: Message type and source will have significant effects on specific apparent reality assessments and credibility judgments when overall skepticism toward news messages, cynicism toward media institutions, expectations about the quality of reporting, and habits of news media use are tested as covariates.

Method

Subjects and design

A total of 516 students from an introductory communication course at a large northwestern university participated in a between-groups, 3 (source type) x 3 (message type) factorial experiment in February of 1993. After completing a pretest that assessed general levels of skepticism toward the news and news institutions, participants were randomly assigned to read a fictitious news story, which they were told actually had appeared in the newspaper sometime within the past week. After reading the story, respondents answered post-test questions assessing judgments of apparent reality of the stories and credibility of the newspapers, media use, voting behavior, political knowledge, political efficacy, interpersonal political communication patterns and demographics. The complete measures may be found in the appendix.

Credibility questions were drawn and adapted from previous studies on credibility and apparent reality assessments were adapted from Austin (1990) and further developed based on the review of the literature. Media use questions were based on the technique used by Nelson (1991), political efficacy was based on the measures developed by Hess & Torney (1967), and political communication was based on the index developed by Hess & Torney (1967). Political knowledge questions were based on current events. Demographics were measured by asking respondents to circle any and all ethnicities to which they might belong, and by asking them, on a continuous 7-point scale ("low income" to "high income"), how they would describe their family. They also were asked to circle what their college status was ("freshman," "sophomore," etc.) and whether they were male or female.

Each news story condition comprised two news stories to control for message-specific effects. A total of six stories were developed for the purposes of this study, based on stories that actually have appeared in the news. Realistic but fictitious stories were used so that participants in the study would be forced to make a decision about the story's believability and the source's credibility for the first time.[1] Subjects were asked whether they remembered reading or hearing about the news story in part to reinforce that the stories were supposedly authentic, and in part because it was assumed that realistic stories would confuse some subjects, who would report that they had indeed heard the news story previously. Stories were written by the first and second author and reviewed by a instructor of reporting techniques. A list of headlines was given to ten individuals of varied educational levels to assess story type. Storied rated almost uniformly as "easy to believe" were used in the "innocuous" condition, stories rated almost uniformly as "hard to believe" were used in the "sensational" condition, and stories rated easy to believe by some respondents, hard to believe by others, or somewhere in the middle, were used in the "ambiguous" condition. The innocuous stories included an item about homeless shelters and food banks being short on donations ("Shelters") and an item that a company ("General Hydraulics") was denying that a leak of toxic waste from one of its plants was responsible for the deaths of fish in a river. The ambiguous stories included an item about a Los Angeles suburb building a wall around the entire town to keep out undesirables ("Riff-Raff") and an item about an increase in the crime rate in a variety of smaller cities being linked to the migration of gang members from bigger cities ("Gangs"). The sensational stories included an item about a surrogate mother ape giving birth to a human baby ("Ape") and an item about a sheriff being returned to earth by aliens after having been missing for many decades ("Sheriff").

The sources included the New York Times (reputable) and the Star (disreputable), as well as a third fictitious newspaper called the Louisville Chronicle (ambiguous). The name for the fictitious paper was chosen because it is a mid-sized city with which most students in the sample would be unfamiliar. Therefore, they would not know whether its newspapers would be of high or of low quality, but it could be large enough to have its own reporters covering the stories ostensibly printed in its pages. Smaller newspapers would be more likely to use primarily wire copy or news services for their national stories.

Stories were of approximately equal length, of about 400 words. They were type-set in the type-face used by the newspapers in which they were to appear. Title lines of approximately equal length were included to make the stories appear authentic, and the stories were made to look as if they were surrounded by advertising. Only fragments of the advertisements could be seen on the page, however, to avoid any possible confound.

Data collection

Data collection was conducted in 20 discussion sections of the class, under the supervision of one of the authors. Before respondents completed the pretest, the experimenter read a short statement indicating that the news story in their questionnaire was drawn from a recent newspaper. Debriefing took place one week later, after all of the students had completed their participation in the study.

Results

Manipulation checks

Manipulation checks were performed on the source and message conditions. A total of 41 (8%) subjects reported that they had read or heard of the story before, with 438 (85%) reporting they had not, and 34 (7%) indicating that they were unsure. Oneway analysis of variance using group contrasts tested for a message-type effect on the judgment, "Do you think things are the way the story made them seem [not at all/completely]"? A significant main effect was found for message type ($F[2,513]=113.14$, $p<.001$), with the innocuous message rated most positively ($M=2.47$, $N=168$), the ambiguous message being rated less positively ($M=4.09$, $N=176$), and the sensational story rated lowest ($M=4.56$, $N=172$). As expected, significant differences existed between the innocuous and sensational conditions ($t=-14.78$, $p<.001$), between the ambiguous and sensational conditions ($t=-12.40$, $p<.001$) and between the innocuous and ambiguous conditions ($t=-5.82$, $p<.001$).

Results assessing whether there were specific message effects also were significant ($F[5,510]=54.10$, $p<.001$). As expected, the "Ape" ($M=2.77$, $N=82$) and "Sheriff" ($M=2.19$, $N=86$) stories were evaluated as least believable. Analysis of group contrasts revealed significant differences between each group, with the exception being "General Hydraulics" ($M=4.07$, $N=84$) not significantly different from "Riff-Raff" ($M=4.15$, $N=89$) and "Riff-Raff" not significantly different from "Gangs" ($M=4.02$,

N=87). "General Hydraulics" and "Gangs" also did not differ significantly, suggesting that, although the "General Hydraulics" story pretested as highly believable, the respondents in the sample found it ambiguous. A reanalysis of all results reported herein, however, with only the "Shelters" (M=5.02, N=88) message in the innocuous category and the other three stories labeled as ambiguous, did not change the results of any of the analyses performed to test the hypotheses.

A manipulation check also was performed for source type. Specifically, oneway analysis of variance of source type was performed on the item, "Do you think the newspaper that published this story tells the truth [never/always]?" The results were significant (F[2,511]=3.25, p<.05). Analysis of group contrasts revealed that the most reputable source (The *New York Times*, M=4.13, N=172) was evaluated as significantly more truthful (t=2.38, df=511,, p<.05) than the least reputable source (The *Star*, M=3.78, N=170), and the least reputable source was rated significantly differently (t=1.99, df=511, p<.05) from the ambiguous source (The *Louisville Chronicle*, M=4.07, N=172). The ambiguous and most reputable sources, however, were not rated significantly differently. Analysis of group contrasts was performed in the tests of Hypotheses 2 and 3 to check for significant effects between the "most reputable" and "least reputable" sources.

Findings

To test Hypothesis 1, that apparent reality assessments and credibility judgments should be separate constructs, a factor analysis was performed using varimax rotation. A total of three factors emerged, roughly corresponding to the three factors expected to represent apparent reality assessments (ARAs) and credibility judgments, but as joint rather than separate constructs. Thus, as shown in Table 1, one factor included variables regarding the accuracy of message content and the truthfulness of the source, which was labeled "Accuracy/Truthfulness." A second factor included variables of representativeness of message content and expertise of the source, and was thus labeled "Representativeness/Expertise." A third factor comprised variables of message and source bias, and was named "Perspective/Bias." Thus, hypothesis one was not confirmed.

Table 1 About Here

To build the strongest joint indices for further analysis, reliability analysis was performed, including Cronbach's alpha and item-total statistics. It was determined that the strongest indices comprised the parallel variables from apparent reality and credibility, roughly corresponding to the results of the factor analysis. Several variables assessing perspective and bias, however, which loaded somewhat high on several factors, were excised from the Accuracy/Truth and Representativeness/Expertise indices and were added to the Perspective/Bias index. The resultant indices exhibited higher reliability, as measured by Cronbach's alpha and zero-order correlations for indices comprised of only two variables, than did accuracy (.86) separate from truthfulness (*r*=.61, *p*<.01), representativeness (*alpha*=.67) separate from expertise (*alpha*=.45), and perspective (*alpha*=.69) separate from bias (*r*=.29, *p*<.01). Descriptive statistics for the accuracy/truth (*alpha*=.88), representativeness/expertise (*alpha*=.73) and perspective/bias (*alpha*=.75) indices accepted for further analysis may be found in Table 2.

Table 2 About Here

Cronbach's alpha analysis with item-total statistics and confirmatory factor analysis also were used to test the integrity of the political efficacy (*alpha*=.79), political knowledge (*alpha*=.52) and political communication (*alpha*=.81) indices.

Similar analyses were performed on the variables designed to measure general levels of credibility and skepticism toward news sources and messages, which were included in the pretest that respondents completed before reading the randomly assigned news story. The pretest measures exhibited much lower reliability, with *alpha* coefficients or zero-order correlations as follows: accuracy, $r=.09$, $p<.05$; representativeness, .27; perspective, .00; expertise, $r=.17$, $p<.01$); apparent reality assessments as a single index, .27; and credibility judgments as a single index, .51. Only one measure each assessed the constructs of truth and bias. A combined apparent reality/credibility index had the highest reliability, with an *alpha* of .60, still somewhat low. A factor analysis separated the variables into factors that were labeled "quality" (*alpha*=.55), "limitations" (*alpha*=.26), "fault" ($r=.21$, $p<.01$), and "importance" (see Table 3), which did not exhibit

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Table 3 About Here

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high reliability. It was determined, as a result, that whether the lack of reliability in the indices resulted from a theoretical or a methodological weakness, analysis would proceed most appropriately using individual pretest variables of theoretical interest to measure predispositional controls, rather than any index as a whole.

Because apparent reality assessments and credibility judgments did not factor into separate constructs and exhibit higher reliability as separate constructs, hypotheses 2 through 6 could not be tested as originally constructed and were tested on the combined apparent reality/credibility indices instead of on apparent reality and credibility separately.

Hypothesis 2, that there will be a main effect for source on the ARA/credibility judgments of specific messages, such that a more reputable source will be evaluated more positively, and Hypothesis 3, that there will be a main effect for message on the ARA/credibility judgments of specific messages, such that a more innocuous message will be evaluated more positively, were tested using analysis of variance. The analysis revealed a significant effect for message on accuracy/truth (*F*[2.511]=142.31, *p*<.001), on representativeness/expertise (*F*[2,512]=36.56, *p*<.001), and on perspective/bias (*F*[2,510]=18.21, *p*<.001). No significant effects were found for source on any of the dependent variables. Oneway analysis of group contrasts showed that judgments differed in the directions hypothesized, as illustrated in Table 4. No interaction effects for source with message were found.

Table 4 About Here

Hypothesis 4, that in the case of an ambiguous message, the source will have a significant effect on judgments, such that a more reputable source will predict a more positive judgment, found no support in analysis of variance. Hypothesis 5, that in the case of an ambiguous source, the message will have a significant effect on judgments, was supported in oneway analysis wholly or partially on situational factors, but never were based solely on dispositional factors. In addition, judgments were based entirely on message characteristics, with source reputation making no difference.

DISCUSSION

According to these data, apparent reality assessments and credibility judgments are more reliably measured with respect to specific situations--that is, for evaluations of specific messages--than with respect to general dispositions toward media institutions and messages. Consistent with the literature on perceived realism and credibility, situational judgments do appear to fall among three dimensions. Contrary to our expectations, however, the credibility and apparent reality assessments appear in these data to be more reliably measured as a single construct rather than as two separate constructs. Thus, these data do not support the conjecture that it is possible to measure skepticism toward messages as distinct from cynicism toward media institutions.

This could have been a measurement artifact, however, since the questionnaire included more measures of apparent reality than of credibility. The addition of measures used by scholars such as Gaziano & McGrath (1986) and Meyer (1988), which include assessments of concern for the community, respect for privacy, concern for profit, and immorality, would provide a stronger credible source can produce an unbelievable story. But these data raise the additional question of whether studies of source credibility might be more appropriately considered as studies of message apparent reality (at least for some individuals). Much work remains to be done to investigate this possibility, but it seems clear from these data that we have much to learn about how individuals make decisions about issues, individuals and institutions covered in the news. If source reputation makes as little difference in the real world as it did in this small study, one must wonder exactly what cues signal a reader that any particular collection of facts and interpretations--however innocuous or sensational--truly reflect the way things "really are."

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TABLE 1

Factor analysis for the posttest variables

Primary factor loading	Accuracy & truth	Representat. & expertise	Perspective & bias
Story's accuracy	.81	-.31	-.11
Reporter's trustworthiness	.81	.01	-.19
Reporter's completeness	.77	-.23	-.11
Newspaper's truthfulness	.77	-.04	-.11
Source's truthfulness	.75	-.24	-.01
Reporter's competence	-.69	-.12	.13
Sources know what happened	-.56	.31	.07
Story portrayal's fairness	-.49	.28	.39
Reporter's access to facts	.10	.69	.12
More information needed for story	.01	.68	.28
Newspaper made errors	-.32	.65	-.02
Reporter misled by source	-.15	.60	.17
Newspaper trivialized	-.22	.46	.37
Story's completeness	-.42	.46	.22
Newspaper sensationalized	-.32	.45	.41
Reporter's expertise	-.37	.39	.02
Story's bias	-.19	.20	.82
Reporter's bias	-.04	.16	.81
Eigenvalue	6.46	2.15	1.14
Percentage of total variance	35.9	12.0	6.3
Cronbach alpha	.88	.73	.75

TABLE 2

Construction of key instruments

Variables	Mean	Range	S.D.	N	Alpha
Accuracy & truth (Index)	22.4	29	5.7	514	.88
Story's accuracy	3.56	6.0	1.7	516	
Reporter's completeness	3.72	6.0	1.6	516	
Reporter's trustworthiness	3.86	6.0	1.4	515	
Source's truthfulness	3.81	6.0	1.6	516	
Newspaper's truthfulness	3.99	6.0	1.4	514	
Representativeness & Expertise (Index)	36.3	34	6.4	515	.73
Sources know what happened	4.25	6.0	1.7	516	
Reporter's expertise	5.81	6.0	1.2	516	
Story's completeness	5.39	6.0	1.6	516	
Newspaper made errors	5.25	6.0	1.4	516	
Reporter's access to facts	4.85	6.0	1.6	516	
More information needed	5.67	6.0	1.4	515	
Reporter being misled	5.08	6.0	1.4	516	
Reporter's competence	3.50	6.0	1.5	516	
Personal Perspective & Perceived Bias (Index)	24.6	30	5.32	513	.75
Story's bias	4.91	6.0	1.51	516	
Newspaper sensationalized	5.25	6.0	1.45	516	
Newspaper trivialized	4.85	6.0	1.46	516	
Story's unfairness	4.65	6.0	1.61	513	
Reporter's bias	4.89	6.0	1.51	516	
Print news reading (Index)	7.05	12	2.11	515	
Frequency of reading magaz.	3.08	6.0	1.17	515	
Amount of newspaper read	3.97	6.0	1.45	516	
Political efficacy (Index)	16.3	30	6.3	514	
People can change nothing	2.78	6.0	1.72	514	
People in power don't care	4.09	6.0	1.76	515	
People have no say	2.92	6.0	1.68	515	
Government doesn't care	3.45	7.0	1.68	515	
No chance to give opinions	3.06	6.0	1.62	515	

Variables	**Mean**	**Range**	**S.D.**	**N**	**Alpha**
Political communication(Index)	34.6	45	8.8	509	
Talked politics recently	4.06	6.0	1.84	515	
Someone lobbied me	3.09	6.0	1.73	514	
Like to talk politics	3.79	6.0	1.74	514	
Important to be informed	5.70	6.0	1.38	515	
Discuss opposing views	5.14	6.0	1.47	513	
Efforts to persuade others	4.14	6.0	1.75	513	
Talk politics at home	4.37	6.0	1.79	514	
Talk politics with friends	4.23	6.0	1.69	513	
Political knowledge (Index)	4.3	9.0	1.9	505	
Who is governor	.35	1.0	.48	506	
Who are state senators	.24	2.0	.51	506	
Who is vice president	.89	1.0	.31	506	
Who is US Secret. of State	.04	3.0	.22	506	
Name the 3 branches of gov't	2.22	3.0	1.12	507	
Who is school president	.55	1.0	.50	506	

TABLE 3

Factor analysis for the pretest variables

Primary factor loading	Quality	Limitations	Fault	Importance
Stories' accuracy	.67	.03	.15	-.06
Stories' completeness	.66	.04	-.05	-.04
News reader's perceptions	.55	.06	.21	-.02
Reporter's completeness	.54	-.04	-.23	.36
Reporter's expertise	.43	.23	.21	.35
Stories' sensationalism	-.02	.67	.09	-.15
No access to facts	.07	-.60	.39	.13
Reporters misled by source	.09	.56	-.01	.30
Reporters' bias	.25	.48	.34	.12
Stories' truthfulness	.34	.40	.32	-.29
Beyond reporter's control	-.01	-.01	.81	.11
Reporters' incompetence	.38	.07	.46	-.13
Stories' triviality	-.08	-.05	.07	.79
Eigenvalue	2.57	1.40	1.12	1.05
% of total variance	19.8	10.7	8.6	8.1
Cronbach alpha	.55	.26	n/a	n/a

TABLE 4

A. Comparisons between message types
(Pooled variance estimate)

Variable index: Accuracy & truth

Message comparison	Value	S. error	t	D.F.	T prob
Sensational & Innocuous (mean=13.6) (mean=22.5)	8.90	0.56	16.0	511	0.000
Ambiguous & Innocuous (mean=20.6) (mean=22.5)	1.82	0.55	3.3	511	0.001
Sensational & Ambiguous (mean=13.6) (mean=20.6)	7.08	0.55	12.8	511	0.000

Variable index: Representativeness & expertise

Message comparison	Value	S. error	t	D.F.	T prob
Sensational & Innocuous (mean=43.0) (mean=37.0)	- 5.96	0.70	-8.5	512	0.000
Ambiguous & Innocuous (mean=39.5) (mean=37.0)	-2.48	0.69	-3.6	512	0.000
Sensational & Ambiguous (mean=43.0) (mean=39.5)	- 3.49	0.70	-.50	512	0.000

Variable index: Personal perspective & perceived bias

Message comparison	Value	S. error	t	D.F.	T prob
Sensational & Innocuous (mean=26.1) (mean=22.8)	-3.33	0.56	-5.9	510	0.000
Ambiguous & Innocuous (mean=24.9) (mean=22.8)	-2.13	0.55	-3.9	512	0.000
Sensational & Ambiguous (mean=26.1) (mean=24.9)	-1.21	0.56	-2.2	512	0.031

B. Comparisons between sources
(Pooled variance estimate)

Variable index: Accuracy & truth

Message comparison	Value	S. error	t	D.F.	T prob
Sensational & Innocuous means*	1.07	0.69	1.6	511	0.123
Ambiguous & Innocuous	1.13	0.69	1.2	511	0.846
Sensational & Ambiguous	0.93	0.69	1.4	511	0.177

* Means are not provided

Variable index: Representativeness & expertise

Message comparison	Value	S. error	t	D.F.	T prob
Sensational & Innocuous	-0.87	0.74	-1.2	512	0.244
Ambiguous & Innocuous	0.04	0.74	0.1	512	0.956
Sensational & Ambiguous	-0.91	0.74	-1.2	512	0.222

Variable index: Personal perspective & perceived bias

Message comparison	Value	S. error	t	D.F.	T prob
Sensational & Innocuous	-0.94	0.58	-1.6	510	0.102
Ambiguous & Innocuous	-0.37	0.58	-0.6	510	0.522
Sensational & Ambiguous	-0.57	0.58	-1.0	510	0.319

TABLE 5

A. Comparisons between message types when source is ambiguous
(Pooled variance estimate)

Variable index: Accuracy & truth

Message comparison	Value	S. error	t	D.F.	T prob
Sensational & Innocuous (mean=14.5) (mean=22.3)	7.84	0.95	8.3	169	0.000
Ambiguous & Innocuous (mean=20.8) (mean=22.3)	1.51	0.95	1.6	169	0.113
Sensational & Ambiguous (mean=14.5) (mean=20.8)	6.34	0.95	6.7	169	0.000

Variable index: Representativeness & expertise

Message comparison	Value	S. error	t	D.F.	T prob
Sensational & Innocuous (mean=41.9) (mean=36.8)	- 5.11	1.13	-4.5	169	0.000
Ambiguous & Innocuous (mean=39.7) (mean=36.8)	-2.90	1.13	-2.6	169	0.011
Sensational & Ambiguous (mean=41.9) (mean=39.7)	-2.21	1.13	-2.0	169	0.052

Variable index: Personal perspective & perceived bias

Message comparison	Value	S. error	t	D.F.	T prob
Sensational & Innocuous (mean=25.8) (mean=22.8)	-2.98	1.00	-3.0	168	0.003
Ambiguous & Innocuous (mean=24.9) (mean=22.8)	-2.02	0.99	-2.0	168	0.043
Sensational & Ambiguous (mean=25.8) (mean=24.9)	-0.96	0.99	-1.0	168	0.337

B. Comparisons between sources when message type is ambiguous
(Pooled variance estimate)

Variable index: Accuracy & truth

Message comparison	Value	S. error	t	D.F.	T prob
Sensational & Innocuous means*	0.92	0.85	1.1	173	0.284
Ambiguous & Innocuous	0.24	0.86	0.3	173	0.780
Sensational & Ambiguous	0.68	0.85	0.8	173	0.430

* Means are not provided

Variable index: Representativeness & expertise

Message comparison	Value	S. error	t	D.F.	T prob
Sensational & Innocuous	-0.80	1.12	-0.7	172	0.476
Ambiguous & Innocuous	-0.74	1.12	-0.7	172	0.509
Sensational & Ambiguous	-0.06	1.12	-0.1	172	0.960

Variable index: Personal perspective & perceived bias

Message comparison	Value	S. error	t	D.F.	T prob
Sensational & Innocuous	-0.65	0.93	-0.7	173	0.489
Ambiguous & Innocuous	-0.28	0.94	-0.3	173	0.770
Sensational & Ambiguous	-0.37	0.93	-0.4	173	0.691

Appendix

Measures Included in Apparent Reality, Credibility, Media Use, Political Efficacy, Political Communication, and Political Knowledge Indices

Measures Included in Accuracy & Truth Index

Accuracy:

1. On the whole, do you consider this story accurate?
2. Do you think things are the way the story made them seem?
3. Do you think the sources quoted in this story are telling the truth?

Truth:

4. Do you think the newspaper that published this story tells the truth?
5. Do you think this reporter is trustworthy?

Measures Included in Representativeness & Expertise Index

Representativeness:

1. Do you think the sources quoted in this story really know the truth about what happened?
2. On the whole, do you consider this story complete (that is, you were told all you needed to know)?
3. Do you think this reporter might not have had access to important facts that would change the story significantly?
4. Do you think there may be more to this story than the news article made it appear?
5. Do you think the reporter may have been misled by any of the sources?

Expertise:

6. Do you think the reporter was an expert on this topic?
7. Do you think this newspaper could have gotten some of the facts wrong on this story?
8. Do you think the reporter was competent (capable of doing a good job)?

Measures Included in Personal Perspective & Perceived Bias Index

Personal Perspectives:

1. On the whole, do you consider this story biased in any way?
2. Do you think this newspaper sensationalized any aspects of the story?
3. Do you think this newspaper trivialized any aspects of the story?

Perceived Bias:

4. Do you think the story portrays everyone involved fairly?
5. Do you think the reporter may have been biased in any way?

Measures Included in Print Media Index

1. I usually read a magazine (never to more than once a day).
2. How much of the news in the newspaper do you usually read each day? (none to almost all)

Measures Included in Political Efficacy Index

1. What happens in the government will happen no matter what people do. It is like the weather--there is nothing people can do about it. (strongly disagree to strongly agree)
2. There are some big, powerful people in the government who run the whole thing and don't care about ordinary people. (strongly disagree to strongly agree)
3. People like me don't have any say about what the government does. (strongly disagree to strongly agree)
4. People in the government don't care what people like me think. (strongly disagree to strongly agree)
5. Citizens don't have a chance to say what they think about running the government. (strongly disagree to strongly agree)

Measures Included in Political Communication Index

1. How many times during the past two weeks have you talked with someone about the news or politics? (never to more than 7 times)
2. How many times during the past two weeks has someone else tried to make you agree with them about an issue in the news? (never to more than 7 times)
3. Do you like to talk about politics, or is it something other people bring up? (others bring it up to I bring it up)
4. People should keep themselves well informed about what goes on in the government and politics. (strongly disagree to strongly agree)
5. How often do you find yourself talking with people whose ideas about politics are different from yours? (never to very often)
6. If that happens, how often do you try to convince the other person to agree with you? (never to very often)
7. How much do you talk about the news or politics at home with your family? (never to very often)
8. How much do you talk about the news or politics with your friends? (never to very often)

Measures Included in Political Knowledge Index

1. Who is the governor of _________ State?
2. Who are the United States senators from _________ State?
3. Who is the U.S. Vice-President?
4. Who is the U.S. Secretary of State?
5. What are the three branches of the U.S. government?
6. Who is the president of _________university?

1. Indeed, by coincidence, stories remarkably similar to several of those created for the purpose of this experiment appeared in the news media shortly before or after the study took place.

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Assessing U.S. Television's Media Imperialism:
An Exercise in Theory-Building

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ABSTRACT

The concept of media imperialism is problematic because it is difficult to measure or disprove. Media imperialist writers often describe what appears to be a simple cause and effect relationship between U.S. television's global presence and its perceived influence. A quantitative method of measuring the existence and extent of media imperialism in the 1990s would offer new possibilities for evaluating an old concept. This paper focuses on five gatekeeping mechanisms that regulate U.S. television's effects around the world: global satellite restrictions, national gatekeeping policies, marketplace competition, individual program choice, and cultural value holding. The suggested relationship between U.S. television's presence and its measurable effects is determined by availability, accessibility, audience attention, understanding, and value change. These five criteria can be used to quantify U.S. television's media imperialism. Models of the gatekeeping mechanisms and the exposure-effects relationship illustrate the method's main points.

Assessing U.S. Television's Media Imperialism:

An Exercise in Theory-Building

The concept of media imperialism appears to be changing in an age of increasing media choices, especially the media imperialist view of television. Developing technologies during the last 20 years have opened up new possibilities for pluralism in television. The expansion of satellite delivery systems, a proliferation of channel choices, and the growth of local production capabilities in nations around the world have affected the relationship between dominance and pluralism in television programming. This paper is an exercise in theory-building in one area of hegemony theory, the concept of media imperialism as applied to U.S. television exports.

The United States produces more communication through computers, satellites, movies, telephone networks, and broadcasting than any other nation (Dizard, 1989). The most visible evidence of America's media production globally is television; the United States has been the world's leading producer and exporter of television programs for more than 30 years (Collins, 1988). Critics have called America's global television penetration a form of media imperialism that can lead to culture shock and cultural dominance in other countries (Lee, 1979; Schiller, 1989; Wells, 1972), and the terms media imperialism and cultural imperialism are used almost interchangeably in much of the literature. Narrowly defined, imperialism is "the practice or advocacy of seeking to extend the control, dominion, or empire of a nation" (Webster's). Schiller described U.S. media as a wedge to open up other cultures to America's language, consumer products, political beliefs and economic system (1970, 1976, 1986, 1989).

Tunstall (1977) questioned the television imperialism thesis as a possible exaggeration of the power and influence of American television; such questions seem even more appropriate today. The reach of American television has been compared to an electronic empire, but assessing U.S. television's global influence has become more complex than in years past.

Measuring Media Imperialism

A lack of operational definitions and conceptual explication of media imperialism creates problems in applying the concept to specific situations. Even the interchangeable nature of the terms "media imperialism" and "cultural imperialism" may be confusing. Proof of media imperialism would seem to require quantitative measures. In examining the lack of empirical models for international mass communication research, Chaffee (1992) focused on the importance of measuring some kind of change to establish media effects. And if media effects are claimed, researchers can strengthen their claims by telling what specific content audience members have been exposed to that has led to changes (Shoemaker & Reese, 1990). Without an empirical base, the association of television's presence in some part of the world with "hegemonistic" effects implies a causal relationship that is difficult to measure or to disprove. A quantitative method of measuring the existence and extent of media imperialism would offer new possibilities for evaluating an old concept. A key to this effort is the explication of television's measurable effects in a normative theory of media imperialism.

The concept of media imperialism today could encompass many areas of transborder data flow such as international computer networks (Hamelink, 1984), worldwide telecommunications and telephone linkups (Elbert, 1990), global tourist flow (Mowlana, 1986), or even overseas theme parks (Schiller, 1989). Researchers have studied several areas of U.S. competitiveness in global information handling without touching on how American influence leads to measurable effects on individuals (Elbert, 1990; Jussawalla & Cheah, 1987). Many of the communications technologies in use today did not exist when Schiller (1970) wrote about the "global American electronic invasion" more than 20 years ago.

The focus of this paper is on measurable changes in individual values that can be linked to U.S. television. Values may be thought of as "prioritized end states of existence" or "prioritized modes of behavior" (Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, & Grube, 1984, p. 26), and viewing U.S. television programs has been shown to influence changes in some traditional values (Tan, Tan, & Tan, 1987). Traditional values also may be changed by television programs from countries other than the United States, but American television is examined here because of its dominant world presence and its central position in hegemony theory.

Specific television effects on individuals in a given cultural setting should be a central focus of the debate over media hegemony. The concept of measurable effects is a cornerstone of cultivation theory and social learning theory; it should be included in claims of media imperialism as well. In studying television's influence, cultivation researchers have noted the cultural divide between the effects of all previous communications technology advances and the changes brought by television:

> We begin with the assertion that television is the cultural arm of American society...a force for enculturation rather than as a selectively used medium of separate "entertainment" and "information" functions. (Gerbner & Gross, 1976, p. 175)

The cultivation view of television asserts that television creates measurable audience effects through the use of repeated themes. The Gerbner group's long-running series of studies added to the empirical data and to the debate over how television effects should be measured. Bandura's studies in social learning theory (1977, 1978) reported that humans can learn through observation as well as experience and that people may "model" behaviors portrayed on television, especially when such behaviors are rewarded or reinforced. In the 1990s, an in-depth literature review of television studies sponsored by the American Psychological Association noted the subtle and continuous nature of television influence (Huston, et al., 1992). Another review of television effects studies by Signorielli (1991) stated that children learn from television through the medium's "warped view of reality and demography" (p. 67). These studies and reviews place a heavy emphasis on empirical data about television effects. Without empirical data, assertions of U.S. television influence among other cultures often appear argumentative or anecdotal.

The Theoretical Position of Media Imperialism

A typical history of communication development outlines at least four important stages: language acquisition, development of writing, use of the printing press, and the appearance of electronic communication tools from the telegraph and telephone to modern communication satellites (Nordenstreng & Varis, 1973). The final step in communication development is where many scholars believe the relationship between audience and communicator has experienced the most universal and most powerful change; satellite television now offers the possibility of a global audience for a single communicator (Dizard, 1989).

Global satellite communication in the hands of a few may sound hegemonistic, but new technology also offers possibilities for pluralism and grassroots participation in communication (Mowlana & Wilson, 1990). Much of today's discussion of media imperialism focuses on whether technology diversification is increasing media pluralism or creating more opportunities for hegemony.

McQuail (1987) has classified media imperialism as one of five main versions of the proposition that media as culture are "primary moulders of society as well as reflectors of it" (p. 96). All five of these views use the concept of enculturation of individual members of society through media exposure. The five versions of this idea are: individual value change; media operating as an "engine of change"; technological or media determinism; cultivation theory; and cultural imperialism, which views media as channels for the introduction of modern or western values to less developed societies at the expense of traditional values in those societies (McQuail, 1987).

Innes (1951) chronicled the ways in which the dominant medium of communication influences the flow of history, from the secularization of writing in papyrus-dominated Egypt to the printing press and popular journalism of 19th-century America. McLuhan and Powers (1989) used the concept of television as the modern world's dominant medium of communication to predict a "global village" in which all nations will share a culture shaped by the electronic marriage of television with satellites.

According to this view, the first stage of the journey toward a global village will have been completed when the world's many cultures share a visual syntax of slow-motion effects, standardized camera shots, and commercial breaks (Snow, 1983), a condition that requires wide exposure to television.

Components of Media Imperialism

Most examinations of media imperialism include both a cultural and economic component of the message flow taking place between developed and developing nations (Lee, 1979; Schiller, 1970, 1976, 1989; Wells, 1972). For example, Schiller (1970) asserted the developing world was under an "electronic siege" that threatened the cultural integrity of all "national, regional, local or tribal heritages" (p. 109). Lerner (1958) outlined a relationship in which industrialization led to urbanization, which promoted literacy, which had a tendency to raise media exposure, leading to increasing participation in economic and political life, and dramatic cultural changes.

The concept of media imperialism also has been used to define media links to cultural characteristics such as modernization, development, and attraction to consumer goods. Many of these linkages are based on the premise that communication operates as a powerful carrier of culture through simple exposure to messages from outside sources.

Early indexes of media exposure have included sources of news, media habits, and socioeconomic characteristics (Lerner, 1958). Later indexes of exposure to foreign advertising and consumer goods included measurements of international spending by U.S. advertising agencies, direct U.S. investment in foreign countries, and American ownership of overseas broadcast properties (Wells, 1972).

Altschull's (1984) examination of world information flows included newspaper circulation figures and citizen ownership of television and radio receivers in other countries. All of these measurements help develop a picture of the global flow of information, but information flow to audiences should not be confused with message effects such as personal value changes which involve a link between communication and cultural change at an individual, psychological level.

Gerbner (1977) defined communication as "interaction through messages bearing man's notion of existence, priorities, values, and relationships" (p. 199), a definition that includes both the cultural and psychological components of communication. Because language is a part of culture, communication can be analyzed as "a process through which a particular culture is represented, maintained, or transformed" (Corcoran, 1987, p. 3).

Schneider (1976) defined culture as a system of symbols and meanings concerned with "premises, statements, postulates, presumptions, propositions, and perceptions about the nature of the universe and man's place" (p. 203).

Communication carries culture through language, patterns of behavior, and activities that can be modeled, a process that is irreversible once a receiver has been affected by a message (Porter & Samovar, 1985). All of these definitions indicate culture can be learned by exposure to media. The media imperialist thesis should include a method of measuring and quantifying the cultural effects of media exposure.

Much of what critics such as Schiller (1976, 1989) have written about American media imperialism has focused on media interactions with modernization and social development. Lee (1979) defined media imperialism as "cultural imperialism" involving four elements of modernization and social development:

(1) television program exportation to foreign countries;

(2) foreign ownership and control of media outlets;

(3) transfer of metropolitan broadcasting norms and institutionalization of media commercialism at the expense of public interest; and

(4) invasion of capitalistic world views and infringement upon the indigenous way of life in the recipient nations. (p. 68)

To fully assess the media effects of Lee's four elements, a researcher would have to develop operational definitions of terms such as "invasion of capitalistic world views," and "infringement upon the indigenous way of life," as well as ways of measuring these elements in the field.

Wells (1972) called the concept of media imperialism "picture-tube imperialism." He defined two key economic components of the drive for social development through communication as consumerism and producerism, processes that impel traditional societies to consume more of the world's material culture and produce more goods in the non-consumerist sectors of traditional economies.

It is possible to define and measure consumerism through product sales indexes, but it is much more difficult to define media imperialism itself; definitions of a cultural phenomenon are predictably culture-bound. Different media theories produce different definitions of media roles and effects in the world television culture.

These assessments of U.S. television's media imperialism have been problematic, but quantitative measurements of individual value changes offer a clearer picture of cultural impact and media effects. Studies that look for cultural effects of media such as adoption of specific non-traditional values (e.g., Tan, Tan, & Tan, 1987) may be the most viable way of measuring message effects in developing nations. As a theory-building exercise, it seems important to define areas of inquiry about the concept of media imperialism that can be quantified and measured objectively.

Toward a More Quantitative Approach

For the purposes of this paper, U.S. television's cultural imperialism is defined as measurable effects of American television messages on the values of individuals from a non-American culture. Five areas of inquiry are proposed, operationally defined as levels of gatekeeping or thresholds of message accessibility. The five "gates" may be pictured as a series of locks in a canal, opening sequentially to allow television message flow to reach audience members downstream (Figure 1). Flow constrictions at any of these gates restrict the potential effects of U.S. television messages. Gatekeeping begins at the macro, or global message distribution level, and ends at the micro, or individual viewer effects level.

In descending order, the five levels are: global satellite restrictions, national gatekeeping policies, marketplace competition, individual choice, and cultural value holding. These five limitations on U.S. television reception and effects pose formidable barriers to widespread cultural changes among the total available international audience. At each level, some measurable change must occur to increase or decrease the message flow.

The World Gatekeeping System

The most effective way of reaching a global audience is through global satellite networks. Television stations around the world receive programs in other ways, but for sweeping events such as the live broadcast of the Persian Gulf war, a world satellite system has the greatest potential for presenting an American viewpoint (Kellner, 1992). Where satellite reception is not possible, delivery of U.S. television programs becomes more difficult. Belize, for example, depends almost entirely on U.S. satellite television to fill its program schedule (Lent, 1991). Other global satellite limitations include a possible shortage of prime satellite locations in space (Dizard, 1989), the inability of some receiving nations to pay expensive satellite rates, a lack of American involvement in direct broadcast satellite (DBS) networks relative to other nations (Gross, 1990), and the desire of some countries to shut out foreign satellite broadcasts (Mwaffisi, 1991).

The Passing of U.S. Satellite Hegemony

For a time, America held absolute hegemony in instant global communication as the only nation with geostationary satellites, but the COMSAT Act of 1962 moved satellite communication toward pluralism. By the mid-1980s COMSAT's successor, INTELSAT, served more than 170 countries (Demac, 1986), and by 1987 the number of satellite channels had grown from 150 to more than 100,000 (Tedeschi, 1989).

Increases in channel capacity and the number of nations communicating by satellite are examples of the ways technology can influence a move from dominance to pluralism. Developing countries such as Mexico, India, Indonesia, Brazil, and China now own and operate satellites (Demac, 1986). Some scholars have argued that developing nations only increase opportunities for U.S. hegemony by purchasing their own satellite systems (Madrid, 1988; Mody & Borrego, 1991), but these arguments are largely economic and do not include data on media effects. India's national satellite, for example, appears to have increased the flow of indigenous programming (Singhal & Rogers, 1989).

As more nations gain satellite capabilities, they can decrease their communications dependence on the United States and reduce the potential for U.S. television's cultural imperialism. Nations can produce and distribute programs to local audiences via satellite, without having to use American programming to fill time schedules. Restrictions on the amount of U.S. programming easily available by satellite form an index of gatekeeping at a global level.

National Television Gatekeeping Policies

Below the global level, many nations have explicit regulatory policies or implicit national broadcasting goals that restrict U.S. television imports. Two opposing forces at work at the national level are desires to avoid the influence of American culture and the economic pressures that make American programming financially attractive. National gatekeeping policies also are affected by an increasing number of channels that require programming (Silj, 1992), global VCR distribution (Boyd & Straubhaar, 1985), the expansion of satellite reception capabilities (Cuthbert & Hoover, 1991), and television "pirating" practiced by cable operators and satellite dish owners (Lent, 1990).

Both developed and developing nations have tried quotas or restrictions on foreign program imports. The European countries have a long history of trying to restrict American imports (Collins, 1988), and the European community is working to formalize and tighten controls on imported American programs in the 1990s (Carveth, 1992). In the early 1980s, restrictions such as those in Great Britain held the amount of U.S. programming in Western Europe to roughly 12% of the total schedule (Figure 2). Recent increases in the number of European channels and a move to some around-the-clock television schedules in Europe have added to the demand for foreign programming. As French television extended hours of operation and expanded from three to five channels during the late 1980s, foreign programming -- much of it American -- began to take up to 75% of broadcast time on some channels (Silj, 1992).

Nigeria encouraged local production of programs by ruling that 70% of all programming had to be produced in Nigeria (Kinner, 1988). Saudi Arabia limits television imports from the United States (Lee, 1988), but widespread ownership of videocassette recorders offers a way to evade strict national viewing policies. Remote areas of Egypt, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and India have received programs through VCR use that were more "Western-culture-oriented" than programs available to other citizens who did not have VCRs (Boyd & Straubhaar, 1985). Arab social and economic elites have come to expect some English-language or American programs on their national systems; some U.S. television programs appear on all Arab systems, including Saudi Arabia, which has an English-language channel (Boyd, 1993).

The struggle to avoid U.S. television imports is particularly difficult for neighboring nations such as Canada, Cuba, and the Caribbean countries, where attempts to limit U.S. imports have met with varying degrees of success (Lee, 1979; Lent, 1988; Lent, 1991). As the world's largest exporters of television programs, U.S. producers can use an economy of scale to sell programs to other countries at a price below the cost of production in any nation (Dunnett, 1990). A combination of high production values, low cost, and low cultural resistance in some countries makes U.S. television almost irresistible to overseas broadcasters with schedules to fill, even though American audiences are very resistant to imported programs (Browne, 1989; Hoskins & Mirus, 1988, Varis, 1988).

American production and distribution advantages, and the television economy of scale are often cited in discussions of media imperialism, but national policies on program imports can limit audience accessibility to U.S. television content. These national gatekeeping restrictions should be included in evaluations of U.S. television's media hegemony.

Marketplace Competition

Even where national policies do not restrict the flow of media imports, marketplace factors may form another barrier. Advertisers may prefer to sponsor locally-produced programs as a more effective way of reaching target audiences than placing advertising in an imported program. In these situations, imports are limited at the channel "headend," or marketplace level. Audiences usually prefer programs produced within national borders when those programs are available (Hoskins & Mirus, 1988).

Where a country has a well-developed advertising industry, a strong consumer market for national advertising, and a substantial amount of local production, U.S. programs are likely to take a back seat to national programs. Such was the case in Great Britain where "Coronation Street" was much more popular than "Dallas," (Collins, 1988) an import of the same genre.

Less developed countries in the Western Hemisphere offer additional evidence of "marketplace gatekeeping." Brazilian viewers and advertisers overwhelmingly prefer national productions to imported television (Kottak, 1991). Broadcasting receives more than half of national advertising revenues in Brazil (Oliveira, 1991), which gives Rede Globo, the largest network in Brazil, a very strong financial position. Brazilian telenovelas dominated popular prime-time slots in the 1980s, while American shows were pushed to the less popular schedule times (Oliveira, 1988).

In the Dominican Republic, rum and tobacco industries target audiences for their products by advertising heavily on locally-produced shows (Straubhaar & Viscasillas, 1991). Money from national advertisers and the smaller, cheaper, higher-quality television production equipment available today have combined to weaken the Dominican Republic's dependence on imported U.S. programs (Straubhaar & Viscasillas, 1991). National dance programs and other local features are becoming more popular despite the Dominican Republic's close geographical location to the United States and a significant amount of American programming.

Marketplace forces also may work in favor of American television imports. Competition for viewers among Malaysia's government and private television stations in the 1980s led to a much more westernized program schedule and more American television imports (Adnan, 1991). Another way marketplace forces may work in favor of U.S. television's hegemony is by creating overseas copies of American shows. Many producers in Europe have adopted American-style formats to meet the challenge of low cost, high-technical-quality U.S. programs (Silj, 1992). Thus, marketplace factors are another gatekeeping level that can either restrict or increase the hegemonistic impact of U.S. television.

Individual Viewer Choice

Individual viewers also may reject U.S. programs for a variety of personal reasons, including language and cultural barriers. Just as Americans have shown a history of rejecting dubbed or subtitled foreign programs, viewers in other countries may find dubbed or subtitled story lines too difficult to follow. While cultural elites in non-English speaking countries like Mexico often enjoy American cable television broadcasts in English (Oster, 1989), viewers prefer programs in the language they use in casual conversation (Barnett, Oliveira, & Johnson, 1989). Accents and individual word meanings also become a problem when U.S. programs are dubbed into a foreign language. An American program dubbed into Spanish and shown in neighboring Mexico, for example, may provoke hoots of laughter from audience members who do not share a common culture (Ranucci, 1988).

Even where factors such as high production values and quality dubbing into the local language are present, viewers may choose local programs over American offerings because of cultural differences. Japan offers an example of a typically American preference for nationally-produced programming. With the exception of U.S. viewers, Japanese viewers usually watch fewer imported programs than any television audience in the world; about 96% of all Japanese commercial programs are produced in Japan (Kitatani, 1988). At a time when the U.S. program "Dallas" was at its worldwide peak of popularity, airing in more than 100 countries, it was cancelled after only six months on Japanese television (Liebes & Katz, 1990). British audiences enjoyed "Dallas," but "Dallas" ranked 11th among the 50 highest audiences in May, 1983, when the show was very popular around the world (Collins, 1988). Indigenous television programs in India reached all-time peaks of popularity by choosing national cultural themes, even though many Indian viewers are proficient in English and familiar with American television programs (Singhal & Rogers, 1989).

U.S. television may enjoy widespread market penetration around the world, but viewer preferences help pinpoint how much of the programming is actually seen by audiences. While some viewers may watch almost anything simply to fill unstructured time (Kubey, 1986), audience research indicates that people can be very selective in their viewing (e.g., Rubin & Perse, 1986). Program ratings offer empirical measurements of individual choice that are helpful in assessing the hegemonistic role of American television.

Cultural Value-Holding

Viewers who watch media imports also report varying levels of television influence and cultural effects after exposure. Cultural value-holding has been measured in studies around the world. For example, a study of Algonkian Indians in Canada found the Indians more likely to absorb American-style cultural messages than other audience members with Euro-Canadian backgrounds and longer histories of television exposure (Granzberg, 1982).

Payne and Peake (1977) concluded that U.S. television had only minimal effects in generating favorable attitudes toward the U.S. among Icelanders shortly after the arrival of American television in the 1960s. Many respondents preferred Icelandic television as soon as it became available.

A study of American television's cultural impact in the Philippines examined the personal values television may be changing among young people (Tan, Tan, & Tan, 1987). The researchers reported frequent viewing of American television programs was related to at least some erosion of traditional Filipino values.

A study of Belizean young people's desire to emigrate to the United States found interpersonal communication more important than media influences. The 11 to 19-year-olds surveyed were more likely to be positively influenced to emigrate by relatives living in the United States than by media exposure (Snyder, Roser, & Chaffee, 1991). However, U.S. television viewing was positively and significantly related to a desire to emigrate (Chaffee, 1992).

In Australia, children who watched more U.S. television were more likely to worry about the possibility of crimes of violence in their own country (Hawkins & Pingree, 1980), but a similar study of viewer effects in Great Britain failed to find the same pattern of fear (Wober, 1978).

These studies indicate American television programs can cause measurable changes in cultural values and world views under certain conditions, but the changes are not described adequately in a simple television exposure -- television effects relationship. Factors such as age, income, and education have been shown to affect the individual needs met by television among American viewers (Robinson & Kohut, 1988; Self, 1988; Yum & Kendall, 1988), so there is no scientific reason to lump viewers in other countries together as a mass audience under the hegemonistic spell of American television. The five levels of gatekeeping described above may restrict or regulate television's cultural effects on individual viewers. An empirically-based method of reporting changes in (1) media conditions and (2) viewer values affected by media offers a strategy for identifying the hegemonistic factors at work among overseas audiences.

Modeling the Exposure-Effects Relationship

A model of the relationship between the total outflow of U.S. television to the rest of the world and the possibilities for adopting American values as a result of that outflow is shown in

Figure 3. The relationship between exposure and effects can be summed up in the equation:

$E = A_1 + A_2 + A_3 + U + V$, where E represents measurable effects;

A_1 represents U.S. television availability;

A_2 represents audience accessibility to U.S. programs;

A_3 represents audience attention to those programs;

U represents at least marginal understanding of program content; and

V represents value change as a result of exposure.

The relative positions on the exposure-effects axis of some of the nations where television effects have been studied are included in the model shown in Figure 3. The positions of these nations in the model are, of course, approximations to illustrate the exposure-effects relationship. Individuals, not nations, experience value changes; the model offers a look at the potential for value change. For example, many parts of Africa are not reached by television, U.S. or otherwise, and television set ownership is very low or non-existent. In these situations, traditional value-holding is expected to remain unaffected by television until direct broadcast satellite networks, VCR ownership, or other factors change the outlook.

The model shows that U.S. television can be expected to have a weak effect on the traditional values of viewers in Japan, who watch few imported programs while viewing very high amounts of Japanese television. Americans, on the other hand, have a high potential for significant cultural effects as a result of high exposure to U.S. television. The situation is much different in Belize, which is almost totally dependent on U.S. imports (Lent, 1990).

The potential for U.S. television's cultural effects appears to be most powerful in countries where English is widely spoken, U.S. television exposure is high, and the host country's television industry is relatively weak or non-existent, conditions which prevail in Belize and some Caribbean countries (Lent, 1991). Canada (Granzberg, 1982), Australia (Hawkins & Pingree, 1980), and the Philippines (Tan, Tan, & Tan, 1987) offer other examples of countries where the exposure-effects model has been studied empirically and where television effects are related to the widespread use of English and availability of U.S. programming.

Opportunities for effects may be altered by global satellite links, national policies, local media programming, audience choices, and the strength of cultural values. The pattern found in many countries is that where nationally produced programs are available in sufficient supply, the American programming presence usually diminishes, and along with it, the opportunity for American television to have significant effects among viewers (Head, 1985). In these situations, American programs are used as filler for the less-watched hours of the schedule.

Conclusion

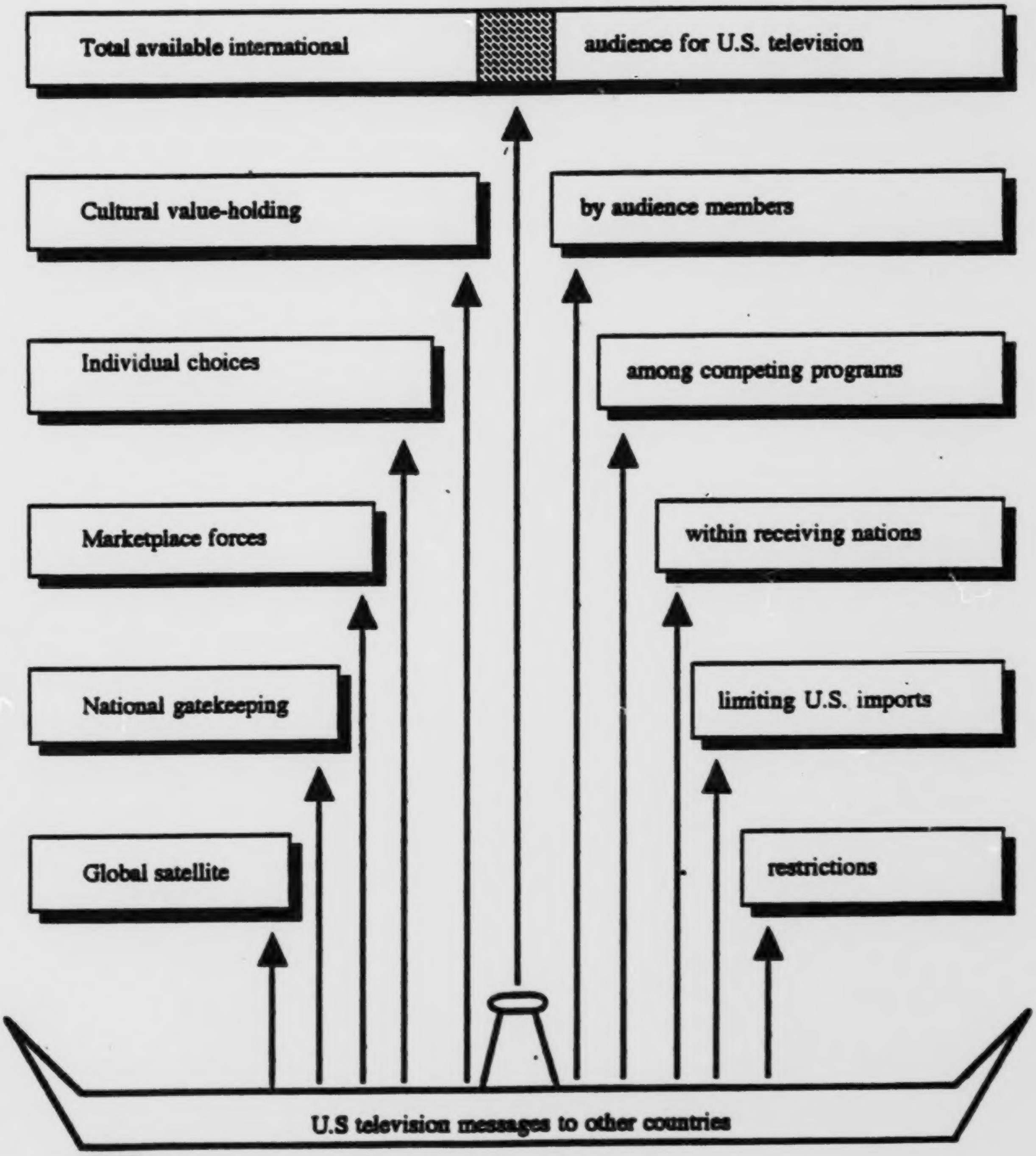
Media imperialism as a normative theory takes on new dimensions as multinational corporations contribute to changes in national loyalties, media ownership, and program production and distribution. If an expanding, competitive European television market is producing more and more programs based on American formats, are these shows European or American -- indigenous or imperialist? If Latin-owned media conglomerates buy interests in American broadcasting companies to market Spanish-language television programs in the United States, are these programs American, Latin-American, or part of a new world television culture? One media imperialist view forecasts a world culture dominated by hegemonistic transnational corporations using a global communications grid to manage the world's resources, development and culture (Schiller, 1986).

Other scholars believe the developed world's increasing media power and technical capabilities will have pluralistic effects. McLuhan and Powers (1989) see indigenous cultures served by new technologies where "hundred channel cable systems will be divided up by culture and language" (p. 84-85), a sort of technological tower of Babel in reverse. The positivist view claims that information technology will break up global culture into a polyglot society where satellites and telematics will combine with educational initiatives to offer developing nations a wealth of tailored solutions to problems with family planning, health and hygiene, agriculture, and teacher training (Hamelink, 1984). In this view, the rapid buildup of information technology will serve to break down media imperialism.

Without careful qualification of television effects, theoretical definitions of media imperialism may depend on an individual's view of what constitutes an appropriate national media policy. Media-poor nations and media-rich nations define the concept of media imperialism according to national orientations. Individuals may define the concept according to their opinions.

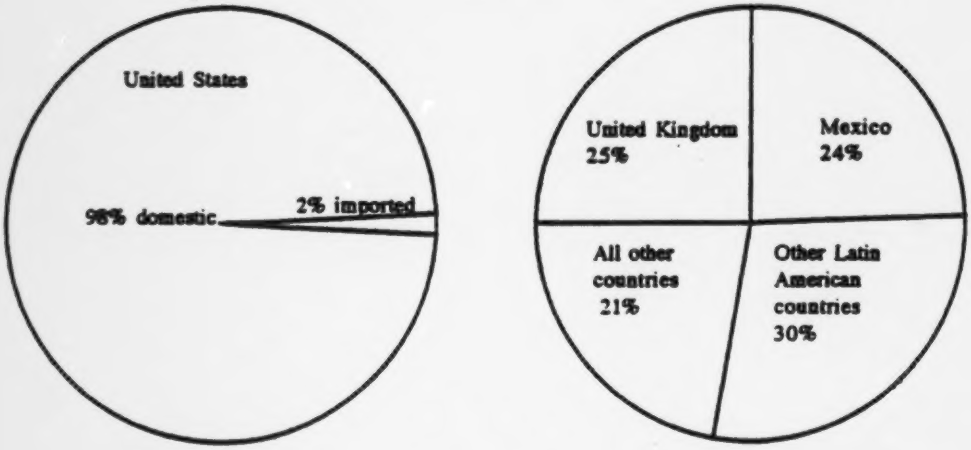
U.S. television is a significant element of the world's information future. U.S. television's media imperialism may be operationalized and measured at the series of gatekeeping points outlined above and through the ongoing study of enculturation effects in other countries. A great deal of research suggests that where U.S. programming is limited by national policies, legal constraints, economic incentives, production and marketing factors, or audience motivations, the influence of American television declines. Economic incentives create a large flow of U.S. television programming for worldwide export. The effects of this flow, however, are controlled by several levels of gatekeeping that regulate U.S. television's cultural imperialism.

Figure 1



▨ Denotes segment of total available international audience showing measurable effects of U.S. television's "cultural imperialism"

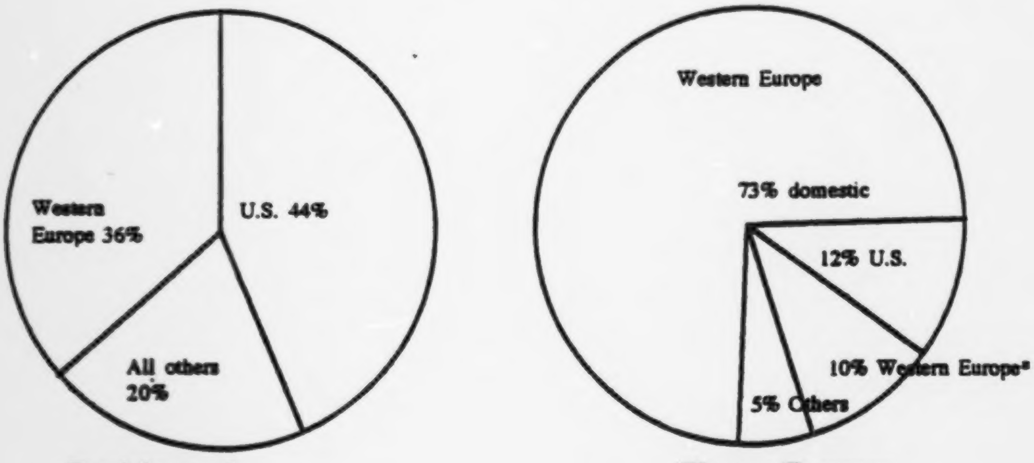
Figure 2



United States
Television Sources

Breakdown of U.S.
Television Imports

Source: Tapio Varis; Trends in international television flow, 1988. Study of a two-week period in 1983.

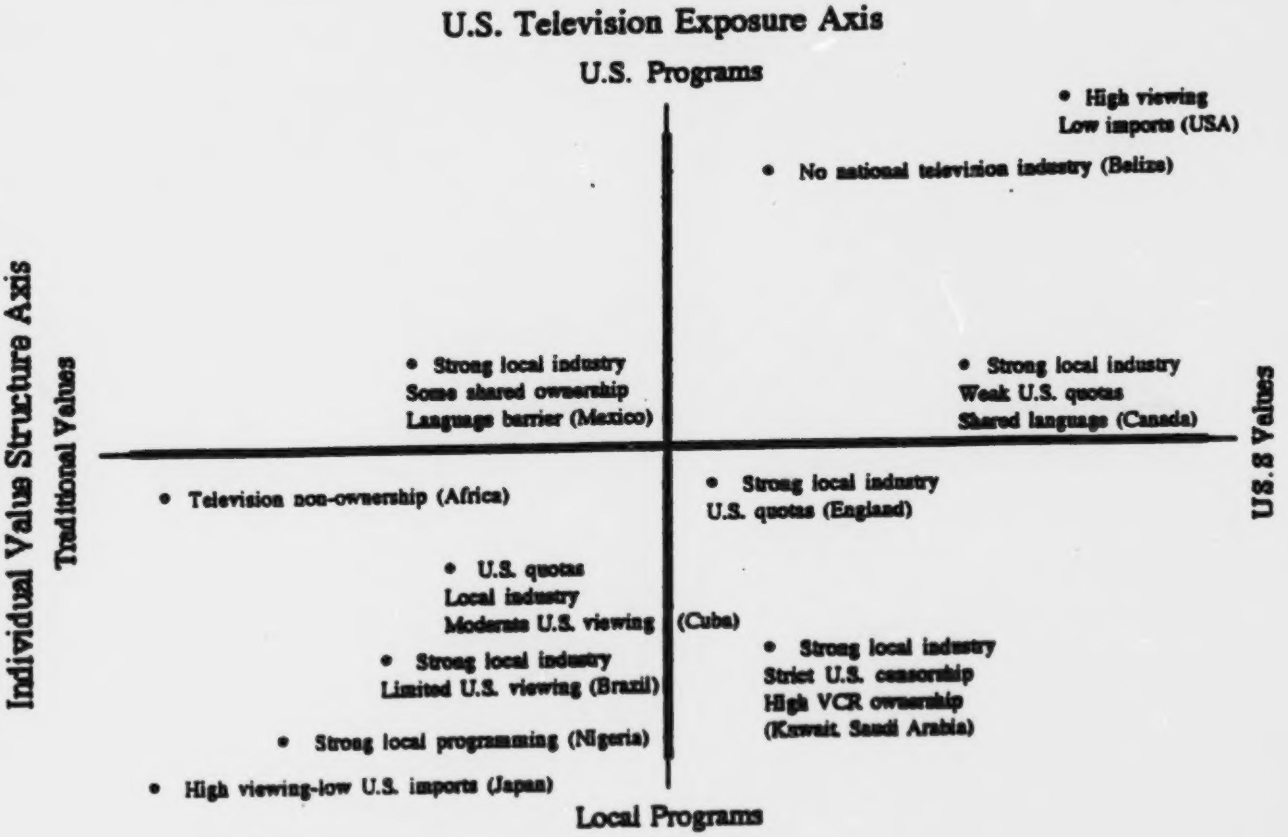


Breakdown of
Western European
Television Imports

Western European
Television Sources

* Note: Western European imports from Western Europe refers to programs originating outside a surveyed nation's borders, but within the European Economic Community.

Figure 3



$$E = A_1 + A_2 + A_3 + U + V$$

Effects= Availability
Accessibility
Attention
Understandability
Value change

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Media Coverage of Social Protest:
An Examination of Media Hegemony

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Media Coverage of Social Protest: An Examination of Media Hegemony

Introduction

All social movements are, to some extent, dependent on the mass media for their success and proliferation (Gitlin, 1980; Lauderdale, 1980; Morris, 1973). While media coverage is certainly not the only means by which social movements can thrive and grow, those that strive for mass support often seek out media coverage to facilitate recruitment and to explain their positions on social issues to the general public. Thus, media representation of events such as protest marches can have significant impact on the ability of sponsoring groups to popularize their movements.

A hegemonic approach to mass media examines the ways in which media decisions about what is news and how it should be covered help to support orthodox ideology. This approach predicts that news events which represent values in opposition to the status quo will be suppressed or presented in such a way as to delegitimize alternative values (Gitlin, 1980; Lauderdale, 1980; Shoemaker & Reese, 1991).

Social protest marches, by definition, are designed to challenge society's status quo. Their objective is often to lobby in the realm of public opinion for changes in law or policy. Because they generally advocate social and political change, protest marches often represent a threat to the dominant social or political ideology. Not all protest marches, however, are equal in their degree of challenge to the established social order. It is likely that some social movements (and by extension the marches they sponsor) represent a greater threat than others. A hegemonic approach to media content would predict that the greater a march's threat to the established social order, the less prominently, substantively, and positively the press will cover it.

This study tests the hegemony hypothesis by examining media coverage of three massive protest marches in Washington, D.C.: The "March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights" in October 1987, the pro-choice "March for Women's Equality, Women's Lives" in April 1989, and the anti-abortion "March for Life" in April 1990.

SUPPORTING LITERATURE

A growing body of literature in communication research considers media content as a dependent variable. Rather than focusing on the effects of media content, such an approach examines the manner in which content is influenced by factors both inside and outside media organizations. Research in this vein has studied elements such as the characteristics of individual journalists and editors, influences of media routines and organizational factors, and influence from outside the media. The study presented here examines the influence of ideology on mass media content and argues that media institutions function, albeit often unintentionally, as agents of social control.

Altschull (1984) argues that access to the mass media is denied to groups that operate outside the accepted social and political boundaries of society. By denying access, he says, the media "serve as significant instruments of social control" (p. 128). Gitlin (1980) considers the mass media as institutions which function as an ideological force engaged in protecting and perpetuating the established social order. The mass media, he argues, are a "significant social force in the forming and delimiting of public assumptions, attitudes and moods--of ideology, in short" (p. 9). Gitlin frames his analysis of media coverage of social protest in hegemony theory, which argues that those who control social institutions perpetuate their power by popularizing their own philosophy, rendering it "unchallengeable, part of the natural order of things" (Boggs, 1976, p. 39). As members of society's elite, Gitlin argues, owners and managers of the major media "are committed to the maintenance of the going system" (p.258). Subsequently, it is in their best interest to limit the boundaries of social discourse and to minimize the impact of dissent.

Shoemaker and Reese (1991) also offer hegemony as a theoretical perspective from which to examine influences on media content. As they describe it, the hegemonic function of media institutions operates by "continually producing a cohesive ideology, a set of commonsensical values and norms, that serves to reproduce and legitimate" the existing social structure (p. 194). The media do so by "marginalizing and delegitimizing voices that fall outside the dominant elite circles" (p. 195).

As Gitlin (1980) points out, groups seeking to expose their causes to a wide audience often engage in the strategy of "making news" to capture media attention. One such method of making news, popular since the civil rights movement on the 1960s, is the organization of protest marches in Washington D.C. While these events serve a number of purposes, such as providing a sense of solidarity and momentum for event participants, their primary purpose is to attract media attention and to attempt to earn, by virtue of the number of participants, legitimacy for their cause. Media attention, however, does not always equal media legitimation. As a number of studies have shown, subtle media machinations can actually serve to delegitimize groups and their causes.

Shoemaker (1984) examined the role of mass media in delegitimizing "deviant" political groups. Comparing newspaper coverage of groups to journalists' perception of their level of deviance, she found a linear relationship between a group's perceived deviance and the media's portrayal of it as a legitimate political group. The greater the perceived deviance of a group, the less legitimately it was portrayed. Shoemaker reported that coverage of groups perceived to be deviant was both less prominent and less positive than coverage of groups not perceived to be deviant.

Several studies have focused specifically on media coverage of social protest. Martindale (1989) found that press coverage of black protest in the 1960s presented an abundance of information on various aspects of protest marches, but it offered very little explanation of the *causes* of protest (i.e., conditions the protests were aimed at changing). She argues that media inattention to the underlying causes of a group's protest serves to obscure the legitimacy of their social grievances. Thus, she concludes, media coverage of black protests in the 1960s, by presenting information out of context, did blacks a disservice by causing them to appear to be "unreasonable, aggressive and demanding" (p. 921).

In her study of media coverage of a 1976 Philadelphia march protesting the Bicentennial celebration, Lauderdale (1980) found that the event was largely ignored by the media, despite the presence of thirty-five to forty thousand participants. The lack of coverage of the march effectively defined it as a *nonevent* for the vast majority of Americans. Thus, Lauderdale argues, press inattention "may be an effective means of social and political control" as it limits the ability of the public to respond to a collective event or social movement (p.88).

Gitlin's (1980) study of the Vietnam-era anti-war movement offers an extensive analysis of media coverage of social protest. He argues that the mass media, operating as protectors of the ideological status quo, delegitimized the New Left by presenting the movement and its participants as deviant, as threats to the established social order. The media, he argues, employ strategies such as selective coverage, omission, and an over-reliance on "official" points of view to invalidate opposition causes.

Olasky (1988) also accuses the media of unfair coverage of social movements that are in opposition to the status quo--in his case, the anti-abortion movement. According to Olasky, journalists' "cozy relation to power" (p. 150) causes them to delegitimize one cause (anti-abortion) in the course of championing another (proabortion). Like Gitlin, Olasky identifies selective emphasis and omission as means by which the media misrepresent oppositional social movements.

This study examines media coverage of three marches on Washington D. C. By their very nature, marches on Washington are designed to establish, via the media, a forum for ideas and opinions which are often in direct conflict with the established social and political norms of society. Hegemony theory argues that dominant social institutions are actively engaged in perpetuating the ideological status quo. Thus, the media, as a representative of the elite, have a stake in silencing voices of protest. One way to achieve this goal is to delegitimize, through various means, the presentation of alternative viewpoints.

In order to test the media hegemony hypothesis, this study tested the following three hypotheses:

(1) The greater a group's challenge to the established social order, the less prominently the media will cover it.

(2) The greater a group's challenge to the established social order, the fewer references the media will make to causes for the group's protest.

(3) The greater a group's challenge to the established social order, the less positively the media will characterize it.

(4) The greater a group's challenge to the established social order, the more the media will use strategies of omission and selective emphasis to delegitimize the group's activities.

Methodology

The Independent variable

The "March On Washington For Gay and Lesbian Rights" took place in October of 1987. A crowd officially estimated at 200,000 marched in support of rights for gay men and lesbians. The "March for Life" took place in April 1990. A crowd officially estimated at 200,000 marched to protest the availability of legal abortion. The "March for Women's Equality, Women's Lives" was held in April of 1989. A crowd officially estimated at 300,000 marched in support of a woman's right to choose abortion.

Both the gay and the anti-abortion marches were, to some degree, designed to protest Supreme Court rulings that established the legal status quo for their respective causes. In 1973, the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade ruling established that women had the constitutional right to have an abortion. In its 1986 Hardwick v. Bower ruling, the Court upheld the rights of states to outlaw sodomy. This ruling, in effect, gave states the right to outlaw homosexuality. Thus, in terms of the legal status quo, the anti-abortion and gay rights marches represented greater threats to the established social order than did the the abortion rights march.

Challenge to the established social order can also be measured by considering public opinion on issues represented by the groups under study, For this study, Gallup Poll questions measuring public support for the groups' primary objectives (homosexual rights and abortion rights) were examined. Polls taken in the same year of the marches were examined, and to avoid possible effects of march coverage on public opinion, only polls taken before each march were considered.

As predicted, Gallup Poll data showed that support for the pro-choice position was significantly higher than that for homosexual rights or for the anti-abortion position. In response to the question "Do you think homosexual relations between consenting adults should or should not be legal?" 33 percent said they should be, while 55 percent, a clear majority, said they should not be.[1]

The following question was asked concerning abortion rights: "In 1973 the Supreme Court ruled that states cannot place restrictions on a woman's right to an abortion during the first three months of pregnancy. Would you like to see this ruling overturned or not?" While this question was more specific than the one concerning homosexual rights, it directly addressed the central issue of the abortion debate--whether or not women should have the legal right to an abortion. A majority of those polled supported the pro-choice position on abortion. Fifty-seven percent of those surveyed responded that they would *not* like to see the ruling overturned, while 37 percent said they would.[2] Therefore, in this study, anti-abortion and homosexual rights groups are considered to be in conflict with the established social order, as defined by the court of law and the court of public opinion.

The dependent variables

Prominence of coverage was measured by content analysis considering four indicators: (1) length of the article, (2) position of the article within the newspaper, (3) position of photographs and graphics within the newspaper, and (4) position of reference to the march within the article.

Length was measured as number of paragraphs in the article.[3] Position of the articles, photographs and graphics were coded as front page of section one, the front page of another section, or in another location. Position of reference to the march in articles not exclusively about the march was coded as throughout the article, only in the first half of the article, or only in the last half of the article.

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[1] Gallop Poll telephone survey. Interviewing Date: 3/14--18/87. 12% offered no opinion.

[2] Gallop Poll telephone survey. Interviewing Date: 12/18--22/89. 6% offered no opinion.

[3] Lauderdale (1980) found number of paragraphs to be highly correlated with number of column inches

Causes for the event were measured as the number of references to reasons for the event. The following guidelines, adapted from Martindale (1989), were used to identify reference to causes: (1) the reporter explaining, in his or her own words or quotes from the participants, what march participants were attempting to accomplish and (2) the conditions the march was aimed at changing.[1]

Characterization was measured by a content analysis of evaluative words and phrases used to describe the event and its participants. Using Shoemaker's (1984) adaption of Osgood's evaluative assertion analysis, nouns, adjectives and phrases used to describe the event and its participants were assigned scores on a seven-point scale (-3 to +3). The sum of scores for each article was divided by the number of evaluative words and phrases considered to arrive at an average characterization score for each article. Intercoder reliability for coding characterization was .73.[2]

Characterization and cause were analyzed only in full articles about the marches. Most mentions of the marches in partial articles contained only brief reference to the fact that the march took place and were not considered extensive enough to warrant analysis.

Media strategies of omission and selective emphasis were examined qualitatively by a subjective content analysis of march coverage. In an attempt to provide a frame of reference external to the media under study, coverage of the gay rights march and the anti-abortion march in alternative media (*The Advocate* and *Christianity Today*, respectively) was compared to coverage in the mainstream media.

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[1] 15% of the sample was coded for references by a second coder to establish reliability. There was 85% agreement on number of causes per article.

[2] 15% of the sample was coded for characterization by a second coder to establish reliability. Pearson's $r = .7260$ $p < .01$.

Sample

The sample consisted of four large metropolitan newspapers (circulation over 100,000), chosen to represent different geographical areas of the United States: the New York *Times* (East), the Los Angeles *Times* (West), the Dallas *Morning News* (South), and the Chicago *Tribune* (Midwest). One-time events such as the marches analyzed here are generally covered only in the few days before or after the event, so newspaper content one week before and one week after each march was examined to ensure that all coverage was included in the analysis.

Results

Prominence

The hypothesis that media coverage of marches more threatening to the status quo would be less prominent was confirmed. Coverage of the abortion rights march was much more extensive than that of either the gay rights march or the anti-abortion march. There were a total of 14 full articles about the abortion rights march, eight about the anti-abortion march, and only four about the gay rights march. There were 15 partial articles (containing reference to the march but not exclusively about it) about the abortion rights march, two about the anti-abortion march, and 10 about the gay rights march (Table 1).

TABLE 1
Number of full and partial articles

Newspapers	Gay rights march		Anti-abortion march		Pro-choice march	
	Full Articles	Partial Articles	Full Articles	Partial Articles	Full Articles	Partial Articles
Chicago Tribune	1	1	1	1	3	1
Dallas Morning News	1	2	2	0	2	2
Los Angeles Times	1	2	2	1	4	5
New York Times	1	5	3	0	5	7
Total	4	10	8	2	14	15

The overall prominence score for abortion rights march articles was significantly greater than the prominence scores for both the anti-abortion march and the gay rights march (Table 2). Three newspapers' coverage of the pro-choice march was nearly three times as great as that of the gay rights march. The Chicago *Tribune* was the exception; its coverage of the pro-choice march was just under twice as prominent as that of the gay rights march. Three of the newspapers' coverage of the pro-choice march was nearly twice as prominent as that of the anti-abortion march. The Chicago *Tribune*'s coverage of the pro-choice march was more than three times as prominent as its coverage of the anti-abortion march.

TABLE 2
Prominence scores[1]

Newspapers	Gay Rights March	Anti-Abortion March	Pro-Choice March
Chicago Tribune	44	22	83
Dallas Morning News	28	50	92
Los Angeles Times	47	58	133
New York Times	62	85	179
Total	181	215	487

All four of the newspapers ran front-page stories on the day after the pro-choice march. The gay rights march was given front-page coverage by all but the Dallas *Morning News*, while only the New York *Times* and the Los Angeles *Times* carried front page coverage of the anti-abortion march; the Dallas *Morning News* and the Chicago *Tribune* carried the story inside section one.

Causes

The hypothesis concerning references to causes was also confirmed. All newspapers studied offered explanations of reasons for all three protests. The pro-choice march, for example, was described as designed to protect the right to abortion and to send a message to the Supreme Court. The anti-abortion march was described as an effort to reassert the movement's political strength and demonstrate its widespread support. And the gay rights march was described as calling for civil rights for gays and lesbians and for increased funding to fight AIDS.

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[1] The total pro-choice march prominence score is significantly larger ($p < .05$) than both gay and the anti-abortion marches.

Media attention to causes for the abortion rights march, however, was twice as great as for the anti-abortion march and nearly three times as great as for the gay rights march (Table 3). This is, to a some extent, a function of the differences in amount of coverage of the events. It's not surprising that a greater of articles would produce a greater number of references to causes. The picture changes, however, when we consider average references to causes per article.

TABLE 3
Number of causes mentioned per newspaper[1]

Newspapers	Gay Rights March	Anti-abortion March	Pro-choice March
Chicago Tribune	10	7	30
Dallas Morning News	18	20	27
Los Angeles Times	13	15	46
New York Times	21	39	66
Total	62	81	169

The average number of causes mentioned per article about the gay rights march is greater than that for both the anti-abortion and the pro-choice events (Table 4). This result, however, can be attributed to the fact that the extensive coverage of the pro-choice march included a number of feature or "human interest" stories (e.g., "Celebrities to Join Pro-Choice Marchers in Capital"). The New York *Times* also printed a "human interest" story about the anti-abortion march. Because the focus of these types of articles is more on individuals than on the march itself, they were less likely to consider causes for the event.

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[1] Analysis of variance showed that the difference in total number of causes is statistically significant at $p < .05$.

When only the lead day-after stories about the event are considered, stories which are more of a "hard news" nature, coverage of the pro-choice march, as expected, paid more attention to underlying causes of the event. The average for all four papers' reference to causes for lead day-after stories was 19.75 for the pro-choice march, 15.5 for the gay rights march, and 13.75 for the anti-abortion march (Table 4).

Although the differences in day-after coverage were not statistically significant, they were in the expected direction. On the average, newspapers conveyed greater legitimacy for the pro-choice movement by emphasizing the causes underlying its protest. The New York *Times* was the one exception; its lead day-after story about both the gay rights and the anti-abortion marches stated two more causes per article than for the pro-choice march.

TABLE 4
Average number of causes per article[1]

	Total full articles about event			Lead stories from day after event		
Newspapers	Gay Rights March	Anti-abortion March	Pro-choice March	Gay Rights March*	Anti-abortion March*	Pro-choice March*
Chicago Tribune	10.0*	7.0*	10.0	10.0	7.0	18.0
Dallas Morning News	18.0*	10.0	13.5	18.0	15.0	22.0
Los Angeles Times	13.0*	7.5	11.5	13.0	12.0	20.0
New York Times	21.0*	13.0	13.2	21.0	21.0	19.0
Average for all newspapers	15.5	9.38	12.07	15.5	13.75	19.75

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[1] Stories marked with an asterisk are actual numbers, as the paper carried only one full article. All lead story entries represent actual numbers.

Characterization

As predicted, characterization of the events and their participants proved to be more positive for the abortion rights march than for the anti-abortion and the gay rights marches, although the overall differences were not statistically significant. In general, all three marches and their participants were described positively--average characterizations for all marches were above 0, the neutral point on the scale. The pro-choice march, for example, was described as "a massive demonstration" and a "day of extraordinary images." The gay rights protest was described as "upbeat" and its participants as "optimistic." The anti-abortion event was described as a "battle for support;" however, the anti-abortion movement itself was described as being "in disarray."

Abortion rights march articles scored an average of +.29 per article, while anti-abortion march articles scored an average of +.22 per article, and gay rights march articles scored an average of +.19 per article. The difference, however, was not statistically significant. As Table 5 shows, the difference in characterization between the pro-choice and the gay rights marches can be mostly attributed to two newspapers: the Chicago *Tribune* and the Dallas *Morning News*. The average characterization score for both of these newspapers was twice as positive for the pro-choice march as for the gay rights march. The characterization of the Los Angeles *Times* was only slightly more positive for the pro-choice march, and the New York *Times* coverage was equally positive for both events.

The difference between characterization of the pro-choice and anti-abortion marches is mostly due to the coverage of the Dallas *Morning News* and the New York *Times*. The average characterization score for both these papers was nearly twice as positive for the pro-choice march as it was for the anti-abortion march. Coverage by the Chicago *Tribune* was roughly equal for both marches, and the Los Angeles *Times* was the only newspaper in the sample that characterized the anti-abortion event more positively than it did the pro-choice march.

Because coding of characterization considered all descriptions of the events and their participants, the preliminary analysis made no distinction between evaluative words and phrases used by journalists themselves or by their sources. To determine to what extent journalists' own choice of words affected characterization, evaluative words or phrases attributed to a source (either named or unnamed) were removed, and only words attributable to journalists were analyzed. The average difference between the gay rights march and the pro-choice march remained the same -- both scores dropped .04 points. Thus, the overall differences in the characterization of these two marches can be attributed to journalists' own use of evaluation words and phrases rather than to their choice of sources for attribution. The unattributed characterization scores for the anti-abortion march, however, dropped .09 points when attributed words and phrases were removed, resulting in a characterization score statistically significantly different from the pro-choice march. This indicates that journalists' own characterizations of the anti-abortion march were slightly less positive than for the pro-choice march.

TABLE 5
Average characterization score by newspaper[1]

	With attribution			Without attribution[2]		
Newspapers	Gay Rights March	Anti-abortion March	Pro-choice March	Gay Rights March	Anti-abortion March	Pro-choice March
Chicago Tribune	+.12	+.26	+.27	+.12	+.21	+.20
Dallas Morning News	+.12	+.16	+.33	+.12	+.10	+.32
Los Angeles Times	+.24	+.33	+.29	+.16	+.13	+.25
New York Times	+.26	+.14	+.26	+.19	+.07	+.22
Average for all newspapers	+.19	+.22	+.29	+.15	+.13	+.24

Omission and Selective Emphasis

A comparative analysis of alternative and mainstream press coverage revealed that several elements of the anti-abortion and gay rights marches were omitted in the mainstream press. The area in which this was most apparent was in the reporting of crowd counts. Because one of the primary purposes of organized protests is to publicly demonstrate the strength of a cause, reports of the number of participants are crucial to a social movement's bid for support from the public and elected officials. And because there are always discrepancies between the crowd counts offered by police officials and those claimed by event organizers, the media have a choice concerning which numbers to report. The *Advocate* coverage of the gay rights march reported the official Park Police estimate of 200,000, as well as march organizers' estimate of 500,000 - 650,000. While all four mainstream newspapers reported the official estimate, only the New York *Times* included march organizers' estimate, which they reported at 300,000. The

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[1] Scored on a scale of -3 to +3. Zero is neutral

[2] Analysis of variance showed that the average characterization without attribution score for the pro-choice march is significantly larger ($p < .05$) than that for the anti-abortion march.

Times described the turnout as "less than the 500,000 expected," thus framing the march as somewhat of a failure. The Los Angeles *Times* also reported that the crowd was smaller than organizers had expected, while the *Advocate* made no mention of the crowd being less than expected.

Christianity Today also reported crowd counts higher than the official estimates for the anti-abortion demonstration. In fact, the magazine article about the march, titled "Abortion Debate Turns into Numbers Game," focused primarily on the debate over the official estimate of 200,000 and organizers' estimate of 500,000. Both the Dallas and the Chicago newspapers reported that march organizers' crowd estimate was larger than the official estimate, but the New York and Los Angeles papers reported only the official estimates. The pro-choice march was the only event for which all four newspapers reported that organizers' estimates of crowd size were larger than the official estimate.

Another difference between the mainstream media and the alternative press was found in the descriptions of march participants. Both the *Advocate* and *Christianity Today* emphasized the diversity of the crowd, pointing out that marchers came "from all walks of life." Indeed, the *Advocate's* coverage of the gay rights march was strikingly similar to mainstream coverage of the pro-choice march. It included short vignettes about individual marchers, detailing their personal struggles in the face of adversity, and presenting them as ordinary Americans devoted to a cause. Such sympathetic treatment was present in the mainstream press only for the pro-choice march, and was evidenced in feature stories in all four newspapers which offered profiles of local residents attending the march. The one exception was the New York *Times* , which printed a feature story on the day after the anti-abortion protest that favorably described a group of local college students who had traveled to Washington D.C. for the march.

Selective emphasis was also in evidence in mainstream coverage of the anti-abortion and gay rights events. Much of the coverage of the anti-abortion march described the movement as being on the defensive, and emphasis was on the movement's political and legislative defeats. All four newspapers mentioned the recent Supreme Court decision giving states the leeway to regulate abortions, a decision supported by the anti-abortion forces. However, rather than describe the Court decision as a victory for the anti-abortion movement, all of the papers but the New York *Times* emphasized the fact that the decision had galvanized the pro-choice forces, with the implication being that the anti-abortion movement was now in the unenviable position of playing catch-up with the pro-choice movement. Three of the four newspapers pointed out that the anti-abortion demonstration had failed to match the numbers of the previous year's pro-choice march, leaving the reader with the impression that the anti-abortion movement was losing ground to the pro-choice forces.

With the exception of one newspaper, coverage of the gay rights march was not seriously plagued by selective emphasis. The march had two primary purposes: to call for an increase in AIDS funding and to demand civil rights for gays and lesbians. The Los Angeles *Times* and the Dallas *Morning News* devoted roughly equal attention to both causes, while the New York *Times* gave greater emphasis to the civil rights issue. The Chicago *Tribune* , however, made no mention whatsoever of the civil rights issue. In fact, 19 of the 26 paragraphs of the story did not pertain to the march at all. Rather, most of the story emphasized the fight in Congress over AIDS funding, a topic which was introduced by the following sentence: "Because AIDS is usually associated with controversial sexual practices or narcotics abuse, the lobby has few public supporters on Capitol Hill." By ignoring the civil rights angle, a major element of the march, the newspaper limited the definition of the cause to a struggle for AIDS funding. Thus, for *Tribune* readers the issue issue at hand was reduced to an association with "controversial sexual practices" that spread AIDS, and it had little to do with the protesting group's perception of denial of civil rights. In this case, selective emphasis served to delegitimize the group by presenting it as a one-issue movement associated with deviant behavior and a deadly disease.

Discussion

The results of this study support the hypothesis that the mass media offer disparate coverage of social protest which corresponds to a group's threat to the established social order. The marches examined were quite similar in that all three were massive events designed to call attention to the groups' demands for legal rights, and no march involved violence. Although the abortion rights march was larger than both the gay rights march and the anti-abortion march (300,000, 200,000 and 200,000 respectively), all three were reported in the press as successful endeavors and the largest demonstration each group had ever organized. Coverage of the abortion rights march, however, was much more prominent, more attentive to causes and more positive in its characterization of the event and its participants.

The media clearly judged the pro-choice march as more newsworthy than the other two. In addition to printing more than twice as many stories about the event, all four newspapers ran stories on the day before the march, providing valuable pre-march publicity which may very well have encouraged a greater turnout. In addition, all four carried front-page stories on the day after the pro-choice march. Only two newspapers carried front page coverage on the day after the anti-abortion march, while three printed day-before stories. The gay rights march was given front-page day-after coverage by three newspapers, but no coverage on the day before the march.

Greater attention was also paid to the causes underlying the pro-choice march. The newspapers examined included a total of 169 causes for the pro-choice march, 81 for the anti-abortion march, and 62 for the gay rights march. By treating the pro-choice event more substantively, the media provided it with a greater degree of legitimacy than it did the other two marches. The media also characterized the pro-choice march more positively than it did the other two. Although the difference was statistically significant only for non-attributed characterizations of the pro-choice and the anti-abortion marches, for all newspapers except the New York *Times* , characterization scores were higher for the pro-choice event than for the other two marches.

While the results of this research offer evidence of disparate coverage of social movements, it is difficult to establish causality in such a study. Operationalization of the independent variable (threat to the established social order) measured general public opinion, and while this is an indicator of the general social climate, it has never been proven that the media purposively consider public opinion when deciding what news events to cover and how to cover them. In further research involving analysis of media hegemony, it will be necessary to to develop more sensitive definitions and measures of threat to the established social order/status quo. Shoemaker's (1984) study of media coverage of deviant political groups, for example, measured the attitudes of journalists and editors toward the groups studied. Such an approach offers a more direct link to those who make decisions concerning the newsworthiness of events and how they should be covered.

While the results of this study supported all four hypotheses to some degree, the greatest effects were, by far, on prominence. There are several possible alternative explanations for the differences in prominence. The abortion rights march participants included a number of political and Hollywood celebrities (celebrities attended the gay rights march as well, but in fewer numbers), and this may have captured more media attention. It is also possible that the issue of abortion rights could be construed by some to be of import or interest to a greater number of Americans than the issue of gay and lesbian rights. However, the anti-abortion march, which addressed the same issue, albeit from the other side, did not warrant coverage comparable to the pro-choice march. Indeed, because of their similarity in terms of number of people affected by the issue at hand, it is the differences in coverage of these two marches that offers the strongest support for the media hegemony hypothesis.

It is more difficult to develop alternative explanations for the differences in characterization and attention to causes. Of particular interest are the differences between the newspapers themselves. The New York *Times* coverage of the events was substantially different than that of the other three papers on these two variables; it was the only newspaper which paid roughly equal attention, on average, to causes and characterized equally positively all three events.

It is clear, however, that the coverage of the other three newspapers in the sample differentiated between the groups. Attention was paid to causes for all events, and overall characterization was positive, but *more* attention was paid to causes, and the characterization was *more* positive for the abortion rights march, the least threatening of the three. Such differences in media coverage significantly limit the effectiveness of groups that engage in social protest as a means of informing and educating the American public. And they also serve to limit the parameters of public discourse about social issues. By ignoring, downplaying, or misrepresenting massive protests such as those organized by the anti-abortion and gay rights movements, the mass media effectively function as agents of social control and actively engage in perpetuating the ideological hegemony of the status quo.

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Newscasts as Property:
Will the Cable Television Act of 1992 Stimulate Production of More Local Television News?

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Running Head: Newscasts as Property

Abstract

Historically, broadcasters have had no way of charging end-users for their programming, and thus little incentive to produce or protect their property rights in local news programming.

The 1976 copyright law revisions established a compulsory license for cable to retransmit broadcast signals. Under that licensing system, no value is placed on local broadcast signals and license fee payment is required only for distant signal importation.

The 1992 Cable Act requires cable systems to obtain retransmission consent or to carry local broadcast signals. It is an opportunity for broadcasters to share in cable's subscriber fees. However, local stations will retain a share of cable end-user fees only if they bring value to cable systems in the form of locally produced programming.

Therefore, allowing broadcast stations greater property rights in their programming could encourage greater community service in the form of increased local news production. More local television programming, long the goal of public interest regulation, may ultimately be achieved through granting local stations greater property rights in local news programming.

Newscasts as Property:
Will the Cable Television Act of 1992 Stimulate Production of More Local Television News?

For nearly seventy years now, lawmakers have cast around for the carrot or stick that would encourage American broadcasters to produce more local news and information programs. From the vague "public interest" standard of the Communications Act to the almost comical precision of a list of nineteen categories of community leaders whom broadcasters were to interview in their ascertainment efforts, Congress and the FCC have struggled to breathe into the commercial world of American broadcasting the spirit of community service.

It has never really worked. Despite cumbersome application forms and perpetually raised eyebrows, in practice the FCC has rarely given a license and even more rarely denied a license renewal on the basis of local news programming. So American commercial broadcasters have never had a regulatory reason to treat local news programming as anything more than a token, a symbolic exchange for the privilege of a license.

Furthermore, historically there has been little economic motivation for television stations to air much local news and information. Traditionally, television stations have survived only by maximizing ratings, not by narrowcasting or niche marketing. Television is not a cost efficient way for advertisers to reach narrow audiences. Producing local news, as opposed to licensing syndicated entertainment, may result in lower ratings at higher costs. Even if narrow audiences might be eager for more local news and information, broadcasters have no physical connection to their viewers. Television stations cannot charge end-users for the privilege of watching specialized programming.

Programming was the freebie that, in David Sarnoff's early vision, would induce consumers to buy the radio music box. The tangible box, of course, had value to the industry as a product to be sold and to the consumer as a product to be purchased. But the programming the box would be used to receive was free as the air over which it was transmitted.

Even as broadcasting matured into a commercial medium, local news and information, in and of itself, had no value to the broadcaster or, for that matter, to the consumer. Consumers' concern over the quality of local news programming was minimal, as long as it was "free." Broadcasters, unlike film makers, thought of air time, rather than content, as their product. Perhaps it is an exaggeration to say that to commercial broadcasters programming is simply the stuff that goes around commercial spots. But broadcasters' copyright in local news and information, with no resale value and no ability to generate revenue from end-users, has never had much practical value as intellectual property.

Ironically, television stations' growing need to diversify the sources of their income could be the force that drives stations to produce more local news. Local news and information may be the key to stations' profiting from their newly won control over cable's use of their programs.

Methodology

This study will trace the history of the broadcasters' battle to control cable's use of their signals. It will examine the courts' early rulings on copyright and cable retransmission and the FCC's attempts to provide copyright substitutes in the form of protective regulations. It will examine the 1976 revision of the copyright law, providing a compulsory licensing system as a compromise that gave a measure of compensation to program suppliers, but left broadcast stations in the cold. And it will look at the passage of the Cable Act of 1992, which for the first time gave broadcasters the ability to control cable retransmission of their signals. This study will examine the technological and economic changes that have altered the relationship between cable and broadcast. And it will consider ways in which this shift in the law of intellectual property may create a climate in which broadcasters have an economic incentive to produce more (and more varied) local news.

The Burgeoning Importance of End-User Spending

Until the mid-1980s the American communications industry (including television and cable, radio, recorded music, newspapers, books and magazines and movies) depended almost equally on advertising revenues and end-user spending (Veronis, Suhler, 1991, p. 22). However, from 1985 to 1990, end-user spending, driven largely by cable, compact discs and VCRs, began to emerge as a significantly greater source of communications industry revenue than advertising spending. During those years, the three media with the largest increases in usage were basic cable, recorded music and home video--all dependent largely on end-user spending for their support (Veronis, Suhler, p. 13). From 1986 to 1990, the compound annual growth rate of advertiser spending in all communications industry sectors was 5.7%. By comparison, the compound annual growth rate of end-user spending during that same period was 10.2% (Veronis, Suhler, p. 13). In 1985, advertising spending and end-user spending were about equal: Advertising spending accounted for some $63 billion and end-user spending for just under $65 billion of the total $128 billion in communications industry revenue. By 1990, advertising spending had increased to roughly $83 billion, while end-user spending had soared to over $105 billion--over 56% of communications industry revenue. By 1995, advertising spending is expected to increase to about $112 billion and end-user spending to almost $151 billion a year. Thus, by 1995 end-user spending will account for over 57% of the total communications industry pie (Veronis, Suhler, pp. 22-23). No wonder that broadcasters, heretofore totally dependent on advertising revenues, seek to find a way to capitalize on the growing importance of end-user spending.

Cable as a Consumer Service

Cable began not as an advertiser-funded medium, but as a viewer-funded antenna service. Thus cable focused first on its capability, because it is physically connected to its end-users, to charge end-users based on their perception of programming value. Cable now enjoys a dual revenue stream because it has become an advertising vehicle as well as a programming service. But cable's ability to establish and to maintain its dual revenue stream has grown from its ability to collect payments from end-users based on the value of the programming transmitted on the system. And end-user fees remain the most important source of cable's revenue, with subscribers spending over $13 billion for cable to advertisers' $1.8 billion in 1990 (Veronis, Suhler, p. 88).

The battle between broadcast stations and cable historically has been a battle not over property rights in programming but over audience--the broadcaster's perceived "end product" to be sold to advertisers. Only as audience eroded did broadcast stations view cable as a competitor because of the ultimate effect that such erosion would have on broadcasters' sole revenue stream--advertising. The battle over programming copyrights has until recently been between cable systems and national program producers and suppliers. Broadcasters viewed audience share, not property rights in programming, as the value to be protected from cable.

Only after having lost the battle to keep cable systems from fragmenting audiences are broadcasters coming to view their programming as a valuable commodity for which cable should pay a portion of the end-user fees generated to a large degree by broadcast retransmissions. It is only now that the property right in local programming has begun to take on a value to broadcast stations as a source of revenue in and of itself. And it is only because of cable retransmission of broadcast signals, which provides a connection to consumers and a means of charging users for programming, that broadcasters can begin to consider charging viewers who want more local news.

Broadcasters and Cable

During the FCC's freeze on television station licensing in the late 1940s and early 1950s, community antenna television systems (CATV) sprang up in small towns still waiting for television (see, e.g., Phillips, 1972, pp. 7-8). Therefore, at first, cable television had no adverse impact on broadcasters (Seiden, 1965, pp. 73-75). In fact, if anything, cable systems increased broadcast audiences by bringing signals to otherwise unreachable viewers (Staff of Subcommittee of House Comm. on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, 94th Congress, 2d Session, 1976, p. 33).

However, after a decade of symbiosis, cable began to change. Viewers who lived in towns too small to support more than one or two television stations began to subscribe to cable to increase program choices with distant signals imported by cable operators via microwave (First Report and Order, 38 F.C.C. 683, 1965, p. 709). Viewers in large cities were lured by the promise not just of better reception of local signals, but also of alternatives to ordinary broadcast fare (Lapierre, 1973, p. 91). By the 1960s, industry observers predicted that cable would one day bring innovative new services, including two way communications. Many broadcasters began to look at cable as a "real and present danger" (Brown, 1969, p. 161).

Broadcasters feared they would have to compete for local viewers with a competitor that did not have to pay for programs (Jassem, 1973, p. 428). If cable systems imported distant signals, audiences would be fragmented, and the monopoly rate the local broadcaster could charge for advertising would drop. A few broadcasters tried unsuccessfully in court to hold off cable's "unfair competition." (Cablevision v. KUTV, Inc., 335 F.2d 348 [9th Cir. 1964]).

Broadcasters produced relatively little of their own programming, and most of what they produced--local news--had no resale market. So cable retransmission of copyrighted works was an issue primarily of concern to those who supplied the movies and syndicated programs licensed by broadcasters. The copyright holder's chances of selling its syndicated programs to small market stations, at least at the price it was accustomed to demanding for exclusive licensing, could be substantially reduced if the programs already had been retransmitted to the market from a distant station on a microwave-fed cable system. It was program suppliers, not broadcasters, who first sought to protect the value of their copyrights from being diluted by cable retransmission.

Fortnightly

Fortnightly Corporation operated CATV systems in West Virginia, providing subscribers in small mountain towns with signals from West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio television stations. It was CATV in its "historic" role, distributing nearby signals to audiences who would receive no service otherwise. But the contracts between United Artists Television, Inc. and the stations whose signals Fortnightly retransmitted expressly forbade cable distribution of the movies licensed for broadcast by the stations. In 1960 United Artists sued Fortnightly, seeking damages and an injunction against the cable operator's continued retransmission of copyrighted works (United Artists Television, Inc. v. Fortnightly Corp., 255 F. Supp. 177 [S.D.N.Y. 1966]).

Fortnightly lost at trial and again on appeal (377 F.2d 872 [2d Cir. 1967]). The cable industry entered into negotiations with copyright owners (Cary, 1969, 157). Then, surprisingly, the Supreme Court overturned the lower court decisions. The Supreme Court decided Fortnightly was merely a "passive beneficiary" of broadcasters' licensed performance of copyrighted works (Fortnightly v. United Artists Television, Inc., 392 U.S. 390, 399 [1968]). Only if Congress changed the copyright law could copyright holders be protected against "reception for profit" by cable (392 U.S. at 401). Under the 1909 copyright law, cable systems performing in their "historic role" had an implied-in-law license to retransmit works already licensed to broadcasters (Comment, 19 Buffalo Law Review 65, 1969, p. 79).

Teleprompter

If cable systems performing their "historic" role were not infringing copyrights, what about large systems providing more than local antenna service? Another copyright suit had been brought against the nation's largest multiple cable system operator, or MSO, while Fortnightly was pending in the same district. After an unsuccessful attempt to consolidate the two cases, the parties in the other case, Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc. v. Teleprompter Corp. (355 F. Supp. 618 [S.D.N.Y. 1972]) had agreed to a stay pending a final disposition of Fortnightly.

Five of Teleprompter's many cable systems had been named defendants in the complaint. The named systems were in communities as diverse as Rawlins, Wyoming and New York, New York. The courts were asked to decide whether the differences in the size and nature of Teleprompter systems, much more diverse than Fortnightly's, transformed the larger Teleprompter into a "performer" under the 1909 copyright law.

Unlike Fortnightly, Teleprompter originated some of its own programming, rather than simply retransmitting broadcast signals. It sold advertising on those channels. It interconnected with other companies to market special events in theaters, via closed circuit transmissions. Its systems made varying uses of microwave links to import programming from distant markets to many of their cable systems (355 F. Supp. at 621-24). Would any of these factors lead the courts to decide that retransmission of broadcast signals by a company such as Teleprompter was a copyright infringement?

The trial court said no. However, the Court of Appeals found that importing distant signals was "performance," and a copyright violation, since it brought viewers copyrighted material they could not otherwise receive even if they built their own antennas (476 F.2d 338, 349 [2d Cir. 1973]). Then the Supreme Court proved as conservative as the Court of Appeals had been "imaginative" (415 U.S. at 416 [Blackmun, dissenting]). It found no "copyright significance" in Teleprompter's distant signal importation.

> Even in exercising its limited freedom to choose among various broadcasting stations, a CATV operator simply cannot be viewed as "selecting," "procuring," or "propagating" broadcast signals as those terms were used in Fortnightly . . . . The electronic signals it receives and rechannels have already been "released to the public" even though they may not be normally available to the specific segment of the public served by the CATV system (415 U.S. at 410).

In short, whatever the size or nature of the cable operator, under the 1909 statute it did not infringe a copyright merely by retransmitting broadcast signals. "Broadcasters perform. Viewers do not perform." (415 U.S. at 410) Neither did cable. Like home viewers, cable systems merely "received."

The Supreme Court's characterization of broadcasters' "releasing their programming" to the public no doubt reflected the lack of importance broadcasters attached to protecting their copyrights in local programs. Just the opposite, the value of broadcast programming was in fact in its ability to be received free of charge and without subscription by anyone with a television set. At the time of the Fortnightly and Teleprompter decisions, local television news had not evolved into the profit center it was later to become. Nor did most broadcasters envision the viability of all-news radio and CNN 24 hours a day in the fragmented media market that would evolve in the decades to come. Even if they had, television, unlike radio and cable services, plays a ratings game in which local news has a growing, but limited, draw (Fowles, 1992, pp. 180-81).

The question of whether distant signal importation reduced the resale value of programming was relegated to a footnote in both the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court Teleprompter opinions. The Supreme Court felt that findings of fact concerning losses to copyright owners would be of "little relevance." It presumed that broadcasters whose signals were picked up for cable retransmission in distant markets would be compensated by advertisers for distant viewers and would in turn pay copyright owners more for the programs they were licensed to exhibit (415 U.S. 413, n 15.) The Court of Appeals had noted that while no evidence of losses to copyright owners had been produced at trial, "common sense would impel one to an opposite conclusion" (476 F.2d at 342, no. 2). The courts showed no inclination whatsoever to consider the possibility that cable (the question of its impact on program resale to broadcasters aside) might represent an additional source of revenue to copyright holders.

The idea of economic loss to broadcast stations as a result of cable's infringement of their property rights in local programming, as one reads the Supreme Court's characterization of broadcasting as a process of "releasing" programming to the public, would have seemed to broadcast stations, program suppliers and cable systems alike an absurdity. If broadcast stations took an interest in the copyright issue, it was because they saw the prospect of cable systems being forced to negotiate with syndicators for the right to import distant signals as the death of distant signal importation--a means of nipping the threat of audience fragmentation in the bud.

The Battle over Audience

While program producers suffered setbacks trying to battle cable in the courts, broadcasters were having considerably more success before the Federal Communications Commission. Over the years, the protectionist FCC was to assume "a veritable Kama Sutra of regulatory positions" (Botein, 1976, p. 3) concerning cable--all of them aimed at preventing broadcasters from losing audience to distant signal importation.

In the early days, when CATV merely enhanced local reception, the FCC refused to take jurisdiction over cable (Report and Order [CATV and Repeater Service], 26 F.C.C. 403, 427-31 [1959]). Later, the Commission decided to regulate microwave-fed cable systems, the ones who imported distant signals (First Report and Order [Rules re Microwave-Served CATV], 38 F.C.C. 683 [1965]). In 1966 the FCC took ancillary jurisdiction over all cable systems, claiming that the cable's "unregulated, explosive growth" (United States v. Southwestern Cable Co., 392 U.S. 157, 175 [1968], quoting H.R. Rep. No. 1635, 89th Cong., 2d Sess. 7 [1966]) could degrade local broadcast service (Second Report and Order [CATV], 2 F.C.C.2d 725 [1966]).

In the interests of protecting local service, the FCC "slapped a virtual freeze on cable" (Botein, p. 3) by prohibiting systems in major markets from carrying distant signals unless they could show that such service "would be consistent with the public interest, and specifically the establishment and healthy maintenance of television broadcast service in the area" (2 F.C.C.2d at 804).

Retransmission Consent Proposed: 1968

In 1968 the Commission proposed an alternative: cable systems would not have to make such a public interest showing if they could obtain retransmission consent from the stations whose signals would be imported by cable systems into distant markets (Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and Notice of Inquiry [CATV], 15 F.C.C.2d 417, 432). The Commission claimed requiring retransmission consent would prevent "unfair competition" between cable and local broadcasters, especially the emerging UHF stations in major markets that the FCC feared would be most damaged by cable competition (15

F.C.C.2d at 433-34). And it probably would have prevented any competition at all from cable systems. In the anti-cable climate then prevailing, it is doubtful any broadcast station would have consented to retransmission of its signal. (Botein, p. 4). The aim of the FCC's proposal did not seem to be to allow broadcasters to bargain over the value of their programming, but to give broadcasters a tool to prevent distant signal importation.

Compromise and Copyright Revision

It was only after cable operators agreed to support copyright law revision that the FCC adopted rules that would allow cable to grow (Cable Television Report and Order, 36 F.C.C.2d 143 [1972]). According to Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution, the purpose of granting Congress power to make copyright laws is to "promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts." Thus, copyright law is intended to strike a balance between the rights of creators to profit from their creations and of society to benefit from its access to creative work. If consumer access to intellectual property is too easy, the motivation to create will wither. If consumer access to intellectual property is too restricted, the "social purpose of copyright" will have been defeated (Kaplan, 1967, pp. 75-76).

When Congress revised the copyright law in 1976, it tipped the scales on the side of access for cable. It created a solution aimed at imposing some copyright liability on cable television, while protecting the cable industry and its subscribers against concerted obstruction from broadcasters or the potentially crushing license fees and transaction costs of negotiating for the right to retransmit broadcast signals or syndicated programs. The new law made it easier to achieve copyright protection for broadcast works generally (Samuels, 1980, p. 907). However, while copyright holders for the first time were given the right to some compensation for cable retransmission, the law gave neither broadcasters nor copyright holders the ability to prevent cable systems from retransmitting broadcast signals or to negotiate a market price for cable's use of copyrighted broadcasts. Instead, the law allowed cable systems to obtain a compulsory license to retransmit television signals in exchange for a license fee dictated, collected and distributed by the government.

The compulsory license allows cable systems to retransmit any broadcast signal, but charges cable systems only for retransmitting distant, non-network programming. Systems pay a percentage of their gross receipts for secondary transmissions multiplied by the number of "distant signal equivalents" they carry. Distant network and non-commercial stations cost only one-fourth as much as distant independents. (17 U.S.C. Sec 111).

The copyright law presumes that owners of copyrights in local television programs and in network programs do not deserve compensation for their retransmission by cable systems. In the case of local programming, the cable system is seen as doing no more than bringing the local signal to those who could get it over the air free or to those local viewers who would otherwise not get the signal because of interference. In other words, cable retransmission is seen to have no effect or a positive effect on the local station, rather than to diminish its ability to profit from its intellectual property. Because network programming already has been released for national broadcast, it too is treated by the copyright law as undiminished by cable retransmission. The payment for distant network affiliates at one-fourth the value paid for distant independents under the compulsory license scheme seeks to compensate merely for the portion of the distant affiliate's broadcast schedule that can be presumed to be made up of syndicated programs. The compulsory license fee was fashioned to take into account cable systems and cable uses that it was argued actually benefited broadcasters by increasing local audiences and did nothing to reduce the resale value of syndicated programming to other markets. Otherwise, it was argued, broadcasters and networks would receive an unwarranted "double payment" (Nimmer, 1979, Sec. 8.18[E]).

In the battle leading to the revision of the copyright law, broadcast stations had fought for protection of their local audiences, rather than for copyright protection for locally produced programs. Copyright law had been viewed as a means to prevent cable systems from importing distant signals, rather than a means to collect payment for cable use of broadcast programming. The question of how to protect copyright for local broadcast productions was never seriously at issue. Neither was the idea that cable should pay for broadcast signals because of the value they represented to end-users. The theory--in hindsight probably flawed--seemed to be that to look for additional revenues based on the value of their programming to consumers, rather than the value of the consumers themselves to advertisers, was out of the question for broadcasters. That cable received value from broadcasters by extending their programs to paying customers as much as it added value to their broadcasts by amplifying their signals never seems to have been seriously considered by either side.

Broadcasters, having achieved considerable protection from the FCC anyway, seemed satisfied that cable was at last going to have to pay something to somebody. They concentrated their lobbying efforts during the 1976 copyright revision on fighting against performance rights--arguing much like their cable counterparts that recording artists only benefited from having their works broadcast to an "increased" audience (Copyright Law Revision: Hearings on H.R. 223 before the Subcomm. on Courts, Civil Liberties and the Administration of Justice of the House Comm. on the Judiciary, 94th Cong., 1st Sess. 488, at 1367 [testimony of Vincent T. Wasilewski, President, National Association of Broadcasters [1975]).

Second Thoughts on Compulsory Licensing

The compulsory license for cable seemed an expedient solution to the complex problems posed by the infant cable industry of the early 1970s. The drafters of the 1976 law were optimistic that the compulsory license was flexible enough to serve to the end of the century (Brennan, 1976, p. 153). Critics of the compulsory license, however, viewed it as an unwarranted subversion of the free market system. In fact, the revised copyright law had scarcely gone into effect when proposals to force cable to obtain retransmission consent for use of broadcast programming began once again to surface. By the late 1970s, the Congress and the White House had both proposed phasing out or eliminating the compulsory license scheme and substituting a retransmission consent requirement (National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), 1979; H.R. 3333, 96th Cong., 1st Sess. Sec. 453 [1979]).

In the 1980s, as the cable industry flourished (and broadcast stations and networks faced audience erosion), the call to force cable to pay for broadcast programming--local and network--got louder. Broadcasters looked at cable's healthy end-user revenues--in large part due to subscriber viewing of broadcast signals--and demanded that they be shared. For the first time, broadcasters seemed seriously to consider that they contributed to cable's ability to attract subscribers because of the value of broadcast programs. For the first time, it can be argued, commercial broadcasters looked at their programming as a product to be sold to end-users, rather than as a vehicle to be used to attract audiences for advertisers.

The Cable Industry, 1992

In the years since the compulsory license became law, the cable industry has been transformed by technological advances--most importantly by satellite transmission of programming--and by deregulation.

In 1976, cable reached fewer than twelve million subscribers. By 1990, over 51 million households subscribed to cable (Veronis, Suhler, p. 90). There were only about 600,000 pay cable households in 1976. By 1990, 29.5 million households had pay cable (Veronis, Suhler, p. 90). Total cable revenues were less than a billion dollars a year in 1976. In 1990, cable advertising revenue and end-user payments were over $15 billion. By 1995, total spending by subscribers and advertisers is predicted to be $22.4 billion a year (Veronis, Suhler, p. 104). "Cable has evolved into a mature, established industry" (Veronis, Suhler, p. 88).

When the compulsory license was fashioned, there was no such thing as a superstation and satellite-delivered basic cable networks didn't exist. By 1990, basic cable and premium cable services had a combined share of almost 24% of television viewing; by 1995, their combined share is predicted to reach over 29% (Veronis, Suhler, p. 101). Over the years, many FCC restrictions disappeared, and cable rates were deregulated.

The Cable Act of 1992

Consumer outrage over rising cable rates and poor customer service focused Congressional attention once again on the cable industry and its relationship to its customers and to its competitors. The Cable Consumer Protection and Competition Act of 1992 was passed over a presidential veto shortly before the election in 1992--a testament to its political popularity.

Under the new law, broadcasters may opt for must carry or retransmission consent. That is to say, stations will be able to demand the safety of assured carriage on local cable systems or shoot for the risky, but potentially profitable, outcome of negotiating with the cable operator for payment in return for the right to retransmit the station's signal. While the Cable Act of 1992 did not repeal the compulsory license for importation of distant signals, it will for the first time give stations the right to decide whether to allow local cable systems to retransmit their signals and to try to negotiate a price for the value they bring to cable.

Granted, much of the talk of broadcasters getting paid for the retransmission of their signals is wishful thinking. There is truth to the argument that cable retransmission of broadcast signals enhances the value of local and network programs by improving reception. In that sense, broadcasters have already been paid in the only way traditionally that they could expect payment--by becoming more attractive to audiences and advertisers. Presumably, therefore, many stations should and will opt for must carry. If stations create little of their own programming, there is little reason for a cable operator to pay for the right to carry a local signal. After all, under the compulsory license scheme, the cable system can easily replace network or syndicated fare by carrying distant signals--and in the case of distant network affiliates, the cable operator under the copyright law can have them at a cut rate. For broadcasters relying heavily on network or syndicated fare, therefore, the value of being carried on the cable system might well be sufficient compensation for any marginal value the station's own programming contributes to the cable system's ability to draw subscribers. Particularly in small markets, must carry appears to be the route many stations are taking, according to early reports after the FCC's initial June 17, 1993 deadline for broadcasters to decide on their options (Cooper, 1993).

But under the Cable Act of 1992 and the FCC's regulations, each station will have the opportunity to reconsider its option every three years. A broadcaster with something more than syndicated or network programming to sell stands a good chance of tapping cable's end-user revenue stream. Thus, retransmission consent--and its potential for creating a dual revenue stream for broadcasters--could be a commercial incentive to produce substantially more local programming. In television, "local" translates into news, sports and information; entertainment has traditionally been more economically produced for national distribution.

Copyright as an Incentive to Make Local News Programming

Cable subscribers, like other television viewers, want access to local television news. A relatively small group of subscribers look to cable as a way of obtaining, at a price, specialized programming, including news and information. A television station that has positioned itself as a local news station has "must-have" leverage with the cable system, regardless of must carry. For it brings to the bargaining table a commodity that cannot be replaced, at any price, with distant signals or national cable networks.

Many cable MSOs, with TCI in the lead, have vowed that they will not pay cash for retransmission consent and have already begun negotiating innovative non-cash deals with broadcasters (Cooper). Not surprisingly, many of the negotiations revolve around offers of new cable channels for broadcasters that presumably will be used for local news and information (Flint, 6/19/93, p. 19). One such deal already announced, for example, gives Cox Enterprises' Pittsburgh station, WPXI(TV), the ability to program a local news and information channel that General Manager John Howell says he has hoped for five years to start up. The Pittsburgh venture will be a partnership from which both cable operator and television station hope to profit (Broadcasting, 7/21/93, p. 7).

Broadcasters opting for new channel space are most likely to profit if they already do substantial local news production and can, in the short term, rely on time shifting to fill large amounts of new program time. (Flint, 6/19/93, p. 20). In the long haul, broadcasters and cable systems may find new and profitable partnerships with broadcasters providing the content and cable operators the delivery systems for innovative, targeted "niche" news programs that don't rely on ratings as the key to profitability. (Foisie, 1993, quoting Glen Larkin, Controller, Bonneville International Corp.) The chronic characterization of broadcast news as a headline service of the sensational and the trivial may change as well, as stations focus on in-depth reporting that can feed and re-feed a second all-news channel.

Moreover, strong local news will give television stations greater ability to protect any compensation they receive from cable systems from program syndicators and networks. Syndicators and networks will certainly demand a chunk of any retransmission compensation local stations get from cable--if not directly, then indirectly as future license fees and affiliation agreements are negotiated. But to the extent that local stations create more of their own programming, they will keep more of the benefits that local news programs, not network or syndicated programs, rightly have earned.

In 1992, for example, WSVN, Channel 7, Miami, Florida became the first independent, according to Arbitron, to beat its network owned and affiliated competition in both early and late news ratings. WSVN, a former NBC affiliate, became an independent of necessity in January 1989, after NBC and CBS purchased stations in Miami and WSVN was left without a network affiliation. The station opted to become "South Florida's News Station" and survived the switch. While Fox affiliation certainly helps WSVN, the station positions itself foremost as a local news station. Not just more news, but a controversial, young-skewing approach to the news, gives WSVN an edge with advertisers seeking to target that attractive demographic (Holtzer, 1993). Thus, WSVN brings to the table bargaining power vis-a-vis not only cable systems, but also Fox, whose affiliation agreements with generally news-poor independents have given Fox the power to use retransmission consent negotiations on behalf of its affiliates to bargain a new cable channel for itself (Flint, 6/7/93).

The balance has shifted, and cable is no longer as needy as it seemed in 1976--or broadcasters as secure. As broadcasters and cable battle over the terms of their new relationship, one of the issues will once again be the survival of local stations. To the extent that lawmakers allow market forces to dictate the respective property rights in programming of broadcasters and cable, they may ironically serve the public interest in local news and information programming better than has any attempt at regulation to achieve those same goals.

"I believe that most of television's problems stem from a lack of competition," said FCC Chairman Newton Minow in 1961. The forum was the annual convention of the National Association of Broadcasters; Minow's speech would live in history (or infamy) for its characterization of television programming as a "vast wasteland." It was an exhortation to community service that didn't play very well to the broadcasters who listened to it more than thirty years ago. And it might not play any better today to a broadcast industry beset by competition for audience and advertisers.

Yet broadcasters may come to see that Minow was right after all. And the competition of which Minow only dreamed--as he spoke of the "experiments" then ongoing with "pay TV" and UHF (Minow, 1991, p. 31)--may deliver the industry and its audience out of the wasteland and into a new abundance of local news and information.

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Unintended Effect: Persuasion by the Graphic Presentation of Public Opinion Poll Results

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Unintended Effect: Persuasion by the Graphic Presentation of Public Opinion Poll Results

ABSTRACT

Newspaper information graphics motivate and inform readers, but one potential unintended effect is persuasion through the graphic presentation of public opinion results. An experiment shows that for low educated readers, a public opinion poll graphic can result in influence by the poll's majority on issues of low relevance. Very different processing strategies are seen based on education, with low educated readers using the graphic as a mental shortcut rather than considering the merits of an issue.

Theoretical Perspective

Graphics Research

Information graphics such as bar charts, tables, and maps have been found to increase retention of information (Peterson, 1983), recall (Almund, Gaffney & Kulhavy, 1985), and increase the accuracy of knowledge about a news event (Multer & Mayson, 1986; Stark & Hollander, 1990).

On the other hand, graphics may be too diverting at times, making them more appealing but not significantly increasing retention of information (Tankard, 1989). At least three studies used an experiment to compare text versus graphic versions of the same information to find graphics aid in accuracy of information about an event or issue (Ward, 1992; Sundar, Perkins, & Zillmann, 1991; Stark & Hollander, 1990), though that latter study found that while a graphic increased accuracy, it did not improve recall.

A series of studies by Griffin and Stevenson demonstrate that graphics effectively complement text in conveying information. Griffin and Stevenson (1992a) found that background material in both graphic and textual forms increased reader understanding of world events. Another experiment by Griffin and Stevenson (1992b) found that reader knowledge of the geographical setting of a story could be improved with a graphic. Finally, a third study by the authors found that statistical information can increase reader knowledge when text and graphic provide redundant information (Griffin & Stevenson, 1992c).

While graphics can influence knowledge gain, little is known about the persuasive impact of graphically presented information or how that information is used in attitude formation. As noted above, the research reported here looks specifically at the graphic presentation of public opinion results. First, we look at the research in poll influence.

Poll Influence

Polls are "powerful, subsidized propaganda," U.S. Rep. Walter Pierce wrote in 1940, which should be recognized as "a potent, if not the most powerful, agency now used to influence public opinion" (1940, p. 240 and p. 243, respectively). Pierce's congressional bill to ban the use of political straw polls failed, and the news media have demonstrated an ever increasing use of poll data.

In an article immediately following Pierce's, pollster George Gallup presented evidence that there was no bandwagon effect (Gallup and Rae, 1940). While poll influence remained an intuitively appealing notion, research has failed to identify a consistent bandwagon effect. Reviews by Marsh (1983) and Merkle (1991a) found that while some studies do favor a bandwagon interpretation, many do not. Some studies even demonstrate an underdog effect, of people shifting to the minority position after exposure to a poll (Laponce, 1966; Ceci & Kain, 1982). Only now are scholars investigating possible reasons for the existence of both bandwagon and underdog effects, looking at such factors as political predispositions (Lavrakas, Holley, & Miller, 1991), prior beliefs (Merkle, 1991b), and personality differences (Hollander, 1992a).

Synthesis and Hypotheses

Graphics "obtain their power because they tap into the very powerful (but at times eccentric) human visual information-processing system" (Kosslyn, 1985, p. 512). An information graphic appears a likely candidate for aiding in heuristic processing. In situations where ability or motivation is low, a graphic should be more influential. McGregor and Slovic (1986), for example, found that graphics divert and entertain readers who find the text too difficult. Sundar, Perkins and Zillmann (1991) concluded that vivid, graphically presented information remained readily accessible in memory. As Pasternack and Utt (1990) note, readers often view a graphic as an easy way to capture the gist of a story. If such information is accessible, and ability and motivation to process further is low, it seems reasonable that a graphic would enhance the persuasive impact of a public opinion poll.

One study has investigated the role of newspaper graphics on poll influence. Hollander (1992b) found almost no persuasive impact the graphic presentation of a poll in a study using students as experimental subjects, though the addition of a graphic with details on how a poll was conducted did have some influence. Hollander expressed reservations about his student subject pool and classroom setting, calling for further research in other settings. This study attempts to use a more diverse subject pool outside of a laboratory setting to explore the persuasive impact of a newspaper graphic. Based on the discussion above, we would expect more influence in situations of low ability or motivation to carefully consider a news article. Ability can be within the person (cognitive ability, for example), or can be within the situation (a noisy room). Motivation is tied to the topic of the news article and whether it is personally relevant.

A graphic, then, should be more persuasive in situations where lower cognitive ability is matched by low motivation to carefully consider an issue on its merits rather than on some other, external cue such as a poll with a graphic. Two operationalizations of cognitive ability are presented: education and need for cognition.

In the political realm, education is often one of the chief correlates for political interest, news media use, knowledge, and sophistication (Kinder & Sears, 1985). Individuals with greater education should be more aware of the issues and thus have the cognitive resources on which to draw in order to weigh the issues more carefully. For lower educated persons, often less comfortable or trained to deal with print presentations of the news, a graphic should provide a ready "shortcut" in their information processing. Therefore:

H1: A poll and graphic will be more influential than a poll without a graphic.

H2: A poll/graphic combination will be more influential on a low relevance issue than a high relevance issue.

H3: Lower education subjects will be more persuaded by a poll and graphic than just a poll as compared to higher education subjects.

H4: Lower education subjects will be more persuaded by a poll and graphic on a low relevance issue as compared to a high relevance issue.

In an attempt to validate the education findings with another variable related to cognitive motivation and ability, a short version of the **need for cognition** index is used. Need for cognition refers to "the tendency for an individual to engage in and enjoy thinking" (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982, p. 116). Higher need for cognition individuals presumably have a greater motivation to think or elaborate on issues. A series of studies has shown persons low in need for cognition are more influenced by peripheral persuasion cues from the messenger (likability, expertise, etc.) while those high in need for cognition tend to be more influenced by the substance of a message (Axsom, Yates & Chaiken, 1987; Cacioppo, Petty, Kao, & Rodriguez, 1986; Cacioppo, Petty, & Morris, 1983).

It is hypothesized that need for cognition will operate in the same fashion as education. That is, low need for cognition individuals will be more influenced by a graphic when motivation to consider a message is low as compared to high need for cognition individuals.

Method

Studies of graphics, and indeed many other social science effects, generally use the proverbial "college sophomore" as an experimental subject. While these studies provide valuable insights, there are dangers in reliance on such a narrow data base (Sears, 1986). These concerns are especially pertinent to a field such as mass communication, where the ultimate product is consumed in the "real world," not in the college laboratory.

In the case of this study, a homogenous student sample would likely provide little variation in motivation and ability to process a message. Therefore, an experiment was conducted using a cross-section of persons from an area shopping mall. While this sample is hardly random, care was taken to attract a variety of subjects to participate in the study.

The Newspaper Articles

Persuasion studies typically manipulate relevance in one of two ways. The first and most popular method is instruct subjects, or place within the message itself, the idea that one version is more relevant than another. The second method is to use two issues inherently different in their relevance. The strength of the first technique is the control of all other aspects of the message. That is, by using a single news article and manipulating the relevance subjects perceive in that story, we can control for all other potential differences between the versions. Using two different issues believed to differ in relevance introduces other potential confounding factors.

The weakness of the first method is its artificial nature (for a critique, see O'Keefe, 1990). Two issues were selected for study based on their recency in the news and the expectation of a difference in the personal relevance subjects would perceive between them. In order to keep as many factors as possible the same between articles, both were about legislative proposals by President Bill Clinton that were written in the same style and format (the EPA cabinet and gasoline tax proposals, see Appendix).

The Poll/Graphic Manipulations

Three versions of each news article were created using desktop publishing software: a control group article containing no poll, an article with a poll result in the text, and an article that contained both poll results in the text and in a pie chart graphic (see Appendix).

In the gas tax article, for example, the fourth paragraph reported:

> A nationwide telephone survey of a representative sample of 1,036 Americans indicated that 61 percent of the country oppose the tax, 33 percent approve of it and 6 percent are undecided. The margin of error is 3 percent.

The version containing the pie chart included a box occupying the upper half of two of the three columns of story text. The graphic included the poll question, the results, and the margin of error. The EPA article poll versions were set up in a similar fashion.[1]

Education and Need for Cognition

Education was measured by a single item asking for years of education. Those with 12 years or less were coded as having low education while those with 13 or more years were coded as having high education.

Need for cognition was measured by three items drawn from the longer need for cognition index. Each was presented as a statement with a 1-to-7 scale where subjects could either strongly disagree or strongly agree. They were:

> I like tasks that require little
> thought once I've learned them.
>
> I prefer my life to be filled with
> puzzles that I must solve
>
> I prefer complex to simple problems.

The first item was reverse coded so a high response meant high need for cognition. The answers on all three items were added and divided by three to provide an average need for cognition score.

Dependent Variable

The primary goal of this study is to study the influence graphics can have on opinion. A post-test included a question asking subjects to respond, on a 1-to-7 scale, to how much they disagreed or agreed with the statement that they supported either the EPA or gas tax proposal.[2] In addition, three other variables are presented to further explore the data: recall from the news articles, the perceived credibility of the articles and perceptions of how well written they were.

The Experimental Setting

The experiment was conducted over a Saturday and Sunday at an area shopping mall. Students in a graduate research methods class managed the study. Students were instructed to get as wide a variety of experimental subjects as possible by approaching shoppers to participate. The instrument took an average of 15 minutes to complete. Subjects were debriefed and offered a small reward (candy and mints) for their participation.[3]

Results

A total of 145 persons participated in the study. Three subjects were excluded from analysis due to being under the age of 17, leaving a total of 142 subjects. Ages ranged from 17 to 80, with an average age of 33.5 with a standard deviation of 15.0 years. The median age (half above and half below) was 27. Males made up a slight majority of experimental subjects (56.7% percent). Education ranged from 7 to 21 years with an average of 14.4. The median was 14 years of schooling, a number higher than normal due to the study being conducted in a university community. Almost half (42.4 percent) reported being from the county in which the university is located, with the rest listing 24 other area counties.[4]

Graphic Influence

Hypothesis 1 predicted that a newspaper article of a poll result with a graphic would be more influential than one without a graphic. Hypothesis 2 predicted this relationship would be more pronounced on a low versus high relevance issue. No support was found for these hypotheses (see Table 1).

Education

It was hypothesized that less educated subjects would be more influenced by a poll when a graphic was present[5]. A significant 2-way interaction between the poll manipulation and education (*F*(2,129) = 3.6, *p*≤.03, see Table 1 and Figure 1) shows that those low in education were persuaded by a poll and graphic (*M* = 5.8) more so than those receiving only a poll (*M* = 3.9). High education individuals showed virtually no opinion differences regardless of experimental manipulation (*M*s = 4.7 and 4.4, respectively).

The effect on low educated respondents was hypothesized to be greater among those who received the low-relevance EPA news article as compared to high educated respondents. A 3-way interaction near the traditional level of significance (*F*(2,129) = 2.3, *p*≤.10) indicates that high education subjects demonstrated little difference between poll groups receiving the EPA news article, but low education subjects were significantly more likely to have an opinion in the direction of the poll majority if they received the graphic (*M* = 6.8) than just the poll and text (*M* = 2.7). Among those receiving the gas tax proposal, neither low nor high educated subjects showed any significant persuasion regardless of the type of poll article received.

Need for Cognition

Scores on the need for cognition (NFC) scale ranged from 1 to 7 with a mean of 4.3 and standard deviation of 1.3. The three-item index demonstrated modest internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha = .45) and was positively correlated with education (*r* = .22, *p*≤.01). A median split was conducted to classify subjects as low or high NFC.

Table 1

Analysis of Variance of Attitude by Poll, Article Topic, and Education Level

	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig. of F
Main Effects					
Poll Manipulation	4.5	2	2.3	0.6	.546
Article Topic	28.6	1	28.6	7.7	.006
Education	11.9	1	11.9	3.2	.076
2-Way Interactions					
Poll X Article	5.9	2	3.0	0.8	.453
Poll X Education	26.8	2	13.4	3.6	.030
Article X Education	46.2	1	46.2	12.5	.001
3-Way Interaction					
Poll X Article X Educ	17.3	2	8.7	2.3	.101

Table 2

Analysis of Variance of Attitude by Poll, Article Topic, and Need for Cognition

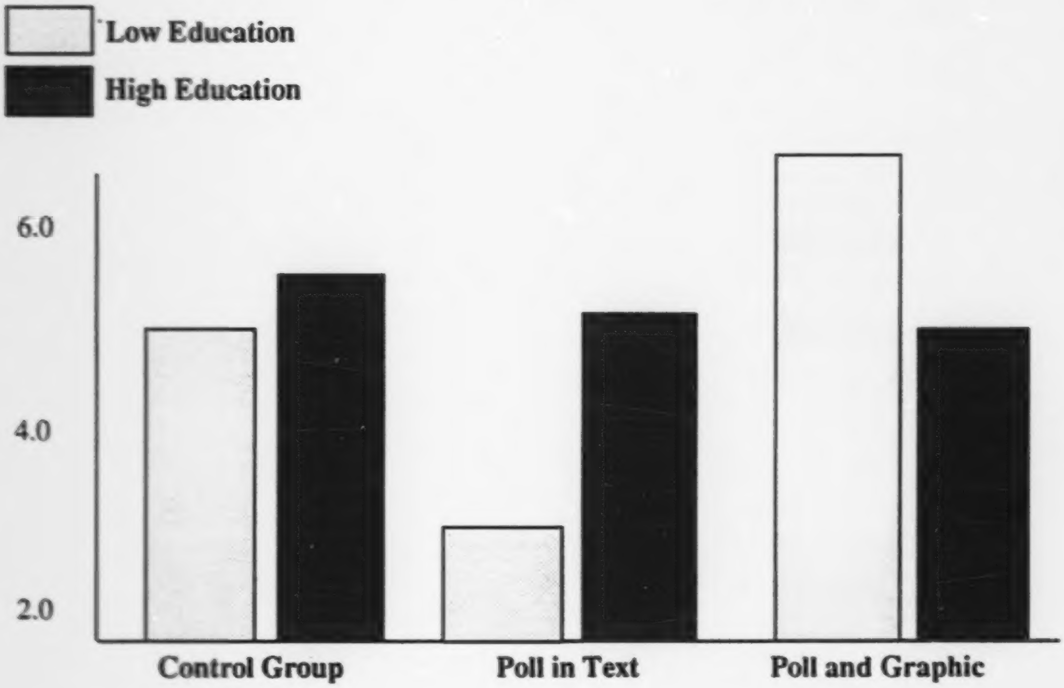
	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig. of F
Main Effects					
Poll Manipulation	3.8	2	1.9	0.5	.633
Article Topic	34.8	1	34.8	8.3	.005
Need for Cognition	6.3	1	6.3	1.5	.223
2-Way Interactions					
Poll X Article	1.6	2	0.8	0.2	.470
Poll X NFC	5.7	2	2.8	0.7	.506
Article X NFC	12.1	1	12.1	2.9	.092
3-Way Interaction					
Poll X Article X NFC	6.2	2	3.1	0.7	.480

Table 3
Attitude toward issues by article topic, graphic manipulation and education

	EPA		Gas Tax	
	Low Educ	High Educ	Low Educ	High Educ
Control Group	5.1 (9)	5.7 (12)	6.3 (6)	3.7 (20)
Poll in Text	2.7 (7)	5.4 (19)	5.2 (6)	3.8 (15)
Poll & Graphic	6.8 (4)	5.0 (20)	5.4 (10)	3.3 (13)

Figure 1

Attitude on EPA proposal by graphic and education



An analysis of variance identical to the one conducted above was run on attitude by NFC, article type, and poll manipulation. There was no significant relationship between need for cognition and the experimental manipulations on attitude for the EPA issue (see Table 2).

A Graphic's Persuasive Power

While it appears the addition of an information graphic can enhance the persuasive power of a public opinion poll among less educated readers when an issue is less relevant, where does a graphic's power originate? Two related theoretical explanations are investigated here. As discussed above, it is assumed that a graphic operates as a heuristic for those with little motivation or ability to consider an issue carefully. To operate in this manner, the graphic must ease the cognitive effort necessary, or simply be used as a shortcut in decision making. But before a reader would use a graphic, it must meet some criteria or rule of thumb that makes it credible.

To test these possibilities, we look at the recall of facts about the story as a surrogate of cognitive effort.[6] To investigate whether a graphic increases assessments of quality of the news article, we also look at evaluations of how well written and credible the news articles were to the subjects.[7]

Among those receiving the EPA news article with only a poll, higher educated subjects gave more thoughts on the listing task ($\underline{M} = 3.4$) than lower educated subjects ($\underline{M} = 1.3$, $\underline{t}(24) = -2.1$, $p \leq .05$). Differences in education and recall were also seen among those receiving a graphic about the EPA issue, but they did not reach the traditional level of statistical significance ($\underline{M}$s = 3.0 and 1.5, $\underline{t}(22) = -1.4$, $p \leq .10$). Looking at perceptions of quality, the addition of a graphic led to lower educated subjects reading the EPA article to perceive it as better written ($\underline{t}(24) = -1.5$, $p \leq .08$) but not more credible ($\underline{t}(23) = -0.9$, n.s.).

To sum up, a low relevant issue with a poll graphic caused greater recall by higher educated readers, but led to higher evaluations of quality by lower educated readers. To study more closely the role cognitive effort and perceptions of quality play in attitude formation, a series of regressions were conducted on attitude by the recall, credibility and well-written variables. These were run only for the EPA issue. For example, when a standardized regression coefficient (beta weight) is significant, it signifies an association between cognitive effort and an attitude in the direction of the poll's majority. If a graphic's persuasive power lies in its use as a cognitive shortcut, for example, then recall should not be associated with attitude or even negatively associated.

As Table 4 shows, cognitive effort is positively associated with agreement with the poll's majority (beta = .50, $p \leq .01$), but not when the poll is combined with a graphic (beta = .13, n.s.), suggesting a graphic suppresses cognitive effort. This result, however, masks significant differences between low and high educated readers.

Among lesser educated subjects, exposure to a public opinion poll resulted in no significant association between cognitive effort and an attitude in the direction of the poll's majority. The addition of a graphic presentation of a poll, however, results in a negative association (beta = -.46, $p < .05$). This suggests that lower educated readers, who from above we know were persuaded by the graphic/poll combination, used less cognitive effort in reaching an attitude in the majority's direction. Higher educated readers demonstrated a positive association in both instances, though a more powerful relationship is found in the graphic manipulation (beta = .80, $p < .01$). The large difference in the beta weights for low and high educated readers suggests a very different processing strategy due to the graphic.

Table 4
Regression on attitude about the EPA issue by recall and evaluations of the article (entries are beta weights).

	Total Thoughts		Credible		Well Written	
	Poll	Graph	Poll	Graph	Poll	Graph
Low Education	.35	-.46[a]	.39	-.03	.27	.65[b]
High Education	.48[a]	.80[b]	.30	.30	.08	.27
Total	.50[b]	.13	.31	.08	.32	.49[b]

[a] $p<.10$
[b] $p<.05$

Perceptions of how well written the news article was played an important role in how low educated readers were persuaded (beta = .65, $p<.01$). There was no significant association among higher educated subjects (beta = .27, n.s.). Thus, perceptions of quality were influential in persuasion by a poll's majority as illustrated by a graphic, but only for lower educated readers.

Summary of Findings

An information graphic presenting a poll is influential only on a less relevant issue and only among those with less education. Need for cognition was unrelated to persuasion.

Two possible explanations were put forth. First, that a graphic causes the reader to see a news article as more credible or of higher quality, increasing the likelihood of using the poll in attitude formation. The second was that a graphic decreases the mental effort necessary, causing an attitude to be unrelated to how much someone thinks about the issue.

The results above suggest that a newspaper information graphic illustrating a poll influences lower educated readers when there is little reason to be motivated to consider an issue carefully. Simply put, a graphic causes lower educated readers to agree with the majority--the so-called bandwagon effect--when the issue is relatively obscure. Lower educated readers appear to be using a graphic as a cognitive shortcut, an easy way to reach an attitude, perhaps on the premise that a graphic adds to perceptions of quality of the news article.

Discussion

Newspaper information graphics motivate and inform readers, but the possibility exists that other, unintended effects may occur. A popular staple of newspaper content--the public opinion poll--is often accompanied by a graphic illustrating the distribution of opinion about candidates or issues. The aim of this paper was to discover whether a graphic presentation of public opinion poll increases the likelihood of a bandwagon effect, of persuading people in the direction of the majority as presented in a poll. The answer is--sometimes, and for some people.

Persons with less education are more likely to be persuaded by a graphic illustrating the results of a poll, but only if the issue is of little personal relevance. This persuasion appears to be related to readers of lower education using the graphic as a mental shortcut and to perceptions that, when a graphic is present, a news article is better written.

On a theoretical level, the findings highlight one instance where a bandwagon effect may be found. Since the bandwagon literature is full of confounding results (sometimes a bandwagon effect, sometimes an underdog effect, sometimes no effect at all), the possibility that a graphic makes public opinion more accessible and therefore more persuasive deserves further attention. On a related point, very different processing strategies appear to be operating for low and high educated readers exposed to a poll graphic. Studies aimed at teasing out these processing differences will tell us much about exactly how a graphic aids or doesn't aid in the processing of information.

Newspaper editors and those creating graphics are typically more interested in informing or entertaining the readers with their information graphics, not in persuading them. These results suggest that they should carefully consider what kind of public opinion polls deserve a graphic. While the results of one study must be viewed with caution, it appears that issues of less importance to the reader are those most ripe for persuasive impact when it comes to using information graphics.

As with all experiments, this study comes with a number of limitations. While an attempt was made to gather a more diverse group of subjects than might be found in a classroom setting, the attempt was far from perfect. In addition, the use of a single article in an artificial setting holds little in similarity to the reading of a full newspaper. Nevertheless, the results offer some insights into the influence graphics may have on persuasion.

Notes

1. In the best of all worlds, a complete newspaper page would be used as the stimuli. That was not an option here. In an attempt to make the articles seem realistic, the final version was printed off, clipped, and recopied to appear as if a real newspaper article had been clipped and copied. This technique "roughed" the edges of the article, making it appear more realistic. The cover story in the study told subjects they would be evaluating a single news article.

2. On the EPA issue, the poll's majority was for the measure. On the gas tax proposal, the poll's majority was against the measure. These were placed in this fashion to closely resemble actual public opinion. The results were recoded in such a way that high scores on the dependent variable of attitude was in the direction argued by the poll majority in both cases.

3. There are obvious strengths and weaknesses to this setting. On the positive side, a wider range of experimental subjects is available. In addition, the distraction in a mall setting more closely resembles actual newspaper reading situations than a quiet classroom or laboratory.

4. No attempt is made here to argue this subject pool is a representative sample. Any number of biases may enter into such a sample, from the kinds of persons who frequented the mall that day to the kinds of persons who were approached to the kinds of persons who would agree to participate. Nevertheless, the sample demonstrates more variety in age and education than one would find among a college student subject pool.

5. Splitting the education level at 12 years led to 74 subjects (52.1 percent) being classified as low education and 68 (47.9 percent being classified as high education. While the choice of where to conduct the split is a subjective one, categorizing the groups at the high school level makes intuitive sense.

6. Recall was asked in a thought-listing task just after subjects read the news article.

7. Subjects were asked to strongly disagree to strongly agree on a 1-to-7 scale with the following: "The newspaper article was well written" and "The newspaper article was credible."

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Development of Parasocial Interaction as a Function of Repeated Viewing of a Television Program

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Abstract

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DEVELOPMENT OF PARASOCIAL INTERACTION AS A FUNCTION OF REPEATED VIEWING OF A TELEVISION PROGRAM

A sample of 88 volunteers were randomly ordered into one of three different exposure levels of the sitcom, Evening Shade. After subjects had viewed either two, four, or six episodes, they filled out a post-viewing survey which included the Audience-Persona Interaction (API) Scale.

Experimental results were more limited in their support of the hypothesis that exposure to TV and PSI are interrelated than prior cross-sectional survey research using the API Scale, perhaps due to problems endemic of the experimental method. Audience beliefs such as affinity for (dependency on) TV and perception of TV as reality were found to be more strongly related to respondents' general feelings about interacting with TV characters--their "parasociability"--than with actual PSI.

Abstract

Philip J. Auter, University of Evansville
Philip Palmgreen, University of Kentucky

DEVELOPMENT OF PARASOCIAL INTERACTION AS A FUNCTION OF REPEATED VIEWING OF A TELEVISION PROGRAM

The primary hypothesis of this research was that increased exposure to a comedy program would significantly strengthen an audience member's parasocial interaction (PSI) with a favorite program persona. Although this hypothesis has been suggested in the past, convincing empirical evidence in support of it is largely lacking.

A sample of 88 volunteers was randomly assigned to one of three different exposure levels of the sitcom, Evening Shade. After subjects had viewed either two, four, or six episodes, they filled out a post-viewing survey which included the API Scale. "Parasociability" (a personality trait much like sociability) was measured with an adapted version of Rubin and Perse's (1987) PSI Scale. Experimental results were limited in their support of the hypothesis that exposure to TV and PSI are interrelated. However, Group Identification/Interaction did vary significantly for subjects across treatment groups. Audience affinity for (dependency on) TV and perception of TV as reality were found to be more strongly related to respondents' general feelings about interacting with TV characters--their "parasociability"--than with actual PSI. An individual's "parasociability" was correlated with their PSI with program characters across treatment groups. Results support the supposition that the more inclined one is to parasocially interact, the stronger the PSI bond between viewer and personae after the TV viewing experience.

Development of Parasocial Interaction as a Function of Repeated Viewing of a Television Program

Parasocial interaction (PSI), first defined in 1956 by Horton and Wohl, is described as a mock interpersonal relationship that exists between audience members and television personae. One of the primary underlying principles of parasocial interaction research is the hypothesis that--similar to the interpersonal relationship--the parasocial relationship develops over time. In the continuing role of game show host, news anchor, dramatic lead, or situation comedy character, the persona shares episodes of his or her television "life", establishing an archive of "shared experiences" with the audience which adds additional meaning to each successive performance. Although the viewer is only involved in an illusory interaction, Horton and Wohl stressed that the viewer does not simply imagine the interaction. It actually occurs.

Quite a few studies have incorporated parasocial interaction measures over the last three decades, yet no one has attempted to determine in a controlled manner whether or not parasocial interaction actually does develop over time and repeated exposure. A number of survey and ethnomethodological studies have provided mixed results on the validity of this underlying principle of the parasocial interaction hypothesis (e.g., Alperstein, 1991; Caughey, 1986; Levy, 1979; Lull, 1980; Nordlund, 1978; Rosengren & Windahl, 1972; Perse & R. Rubin, 1989; A. Rubin, Perse, & Powell, 1985; A. Rubin & Perse, 1987; R.

Rubin & McHugh, 1987). As they have been used in cross-sectional survey research, most PSI scales have not been able to provide solid evidence of the development of parasocial interaction over repeated exposures to program personae.

Although a number of different measures have been developed over the years to quantitatively determine audience parasocial interaction (Houlberg, 1984; Levy, 1979; Nordlund, 1978; Rosengren & Windahl, 1972; Rosengren, Windahl, Hakansson, & Johnsson-Smaragdi, 1976; A. Rubin & Perse, 1987; A. Rubin et al. 1985), some have weaknesses in development and/or use while others were not intended for thorough scrutiny of the phenomenon. Items generated for some scales did not stem from prior qualitative research, and those scales thus may not measure all dimensions of PSI. Other scales, while qualitatively based, have not been subjected to rigorous item analysis. The scant empirical evidence of PSI development may also be due to the fact that previous scales--used in a cross-sectional survey setting--are not specifically designed to measure the development of parasocial interaction between viewer and persona. Rather, they appear to measure a viewer's predisposition to parasocially interact with their favorite persona--or their "parasociability." As such, they seem to tap a personality trait, rather than a developmental process.

Zillmann (1985) has noted that uses and gratifications research has most often been performed using the survey technique --a valuable method. However, Zillmann has suggested that increased use of the experimental method in uses and gratifications research could increase our understanding of audience motives in media use. The current study followed such a path. The primary goal of this study was to test in an experimental setting the hypothesis that parasocial interaction increases over repeated viewing of television personae in a situation comedy. The situation comedy genre was chosen for this analysis because of its relatively short program length and the determination that the genre is high in media interaction potential.

Nordlund (1978) has noted that different media and media contents vary in their potential for parasocial interaction. Media interaction potential is defined by the medium's ability to approximate reality, and the content's inclusion of one or more dominant lead figures "suitable for media interaction," as well as personae who regularly appear in the program or in other media contexts. The situation comedy has been defined as a program that relies on recurring characters, regular settings, and developing family relations (Goedkoop, 1983). Based on Nordlund's definition, the situation comedy genre would be considered high in media interaction potential and an excellent genre to utilize in the study of parasocial interaction.

Therefore, in an experimental setting, this study examined the effects of varying levels of exposure to a situation comedy on viewers' PSI with program personae. The situation comedy employed was one with which respondents had little or no prior exposure. In addition, this study attempted to determine how audience parasociability, affinity for television, and perception of television as reality affect the development of PSI with the program characters. It also looked at how audience viewing levels, prior experience with personae, and genre preference affect parasocial relationships. In order to perform this study, a valid and reliable post-viewing measure of various dimensions of the audience-persona relationship was developed (Auter & Palmgreen, 1992). It is hoped that this scale will prove to be useful in future experimental uses and gratifications research.

Review of the Literature

Development of PSI Over Repeated Exposure

Research on the audience-persona relationship has often focused on the similarity between the parasocial and the true interpersonal relationship (Alperstein, 1991; Beniger, 1987; Caughey, 1986; Koenig & Lessan, 1985; Levy, 1979; Nordlund, 1978; Perse & R. Rubin, 1989; A. Rubin et al., 1985; A. Rubin & R. Rubin, 1985; R. Rubin & McHugh, 1987; Tsao, 1989). Although it has been theorized that, like interpersonal relationships, parasocial relationships develop over repeated exposure, evidence for this hypothesis is mixed at best. There is a solid foundation of qualitative data suggesting such a process exists; however, cross-sectional survey results have been severely limited in their efforts to detect a direct causal relationship between repeated viewing of a persona and increased PSI.

On the qualitative side, Caughey (1986) has asserted that Americans know and feel strongly about media figures--despite "the lack of real face-to-face contact." He has suggested that we spend much of our time in the "other worlds" of the media--social worlds. "Any approach to American society that ignores these social relationships is seriously incomplete" (p. 249), he noted. Researchers have stated that, not only do these media worlds fulfill the needs to escape and parasocially interact, but they also provide a variety of useful information (from role understanding to light conversation topics) that viewers use in real social settings (Caughey, 1986; Lull, 1980). In case study work, Caughey has cited a number of statements from audience members which suggest that PSI relationships do develop over time and repeated exposure to the persona. He offered a number of examples of audience members ranging from the fan to the "fanatic," and claimed the more extreme cases of "social involvement with media figures" (including deep friendship and even love) are actually quite common.

Sometimes opinions about the persona change for the worse when new information does not fit the audience member's desired image of the character. Like interpersonal relationships, parasocial relationships can have a down side. In a series of ethnographic interviews, Alperstein (1991) looked at parasocial interaction with celebrities in television commercials. He found that, in evaluating the persona in the commercial, viewers based their feelings on past experiences with the persona (in other commercials and TV shows). He noted that a commercial which puts a persona in a bad light--in the opinion of a viewer--could have a negative effect on that viewer's impressions of the persona. Alperstein concluded that:

> Repeated celebrity appearances across programming create an intertextual web that can be likened to the complex system of actual social relationships. The advertisement itself is a means by which the viewer can reach out and touch someone to form relationships, alter existing relationships, and,

> perhaps, end relationships (p. 55).

Like Alperstein, Levy (1979) also found qualitative evidence that viewers develop their parasocial relationships with television news personae over repeated exposures.

Quantitative evidence of this development process is limited, however. Using C as a measurement of association between PSI and amount of mass media consumption, Rosengren and Windahl (1972) did find a low but significant relationship in two cross-sectional survey studies (C = .22, .26, $p < .001$). They were not able to determine the direction of this relationship, however. Nordlund (1978) developed a series of indices of "media interaction" that he administered to residents of Sweden in 1972-73. He found an association between level of television exposure and media interaction with certain genres--game shows (gamma = .35, $p < .001$), entertainment programs in general (gamma = .32, $p < .001$), and soap operas (gamma = .31, $p < .10$). Nordlund also found mild associations between exposure level to a specific mass medium and probability of media interaction with that medium using Rosengren and Windahl's (1972) original measure (newspapers, gamma = .10; television, gamma = .23; radio, gamma = .38; weekly magazines, gamma = .36). The results were not statistically significant except for radio ($p < .001$) and weekly magazines ($p < .10$). A significant association between exposure to weekly magazines and probability of media interaction via newspapers (gamma = .34, $p <.001$) was also noted. It must be pointed out, however, that Rosengren and Windahl had stated that they were not satisfied with this scale (1972, p. xx). Levy (1979) also found a mild correlation between total TV news exposure and his index of parasocial interaction (r = .22, p < .01). Nordlund and Levy were also unable to determine the direction of this relationship.

In the cross-sectional survey study which was the basis for development of the most frequently used PSI scales, A. Rubin, Perse, and Powell (1985) found that history of local TV news viewing and amount of local TV news viewing were not significant predictors of parasocial interaction. The authors noted that the self-report method may have limited their ability to discover such a relationship.

R. Rubin and McHugh (1987) found a weak correlation between length of exposure and PSI in a survey study where they asked respondents to pick their favorite TV character across genres (r = .12, p < .05). However, multiple regression analysis to test the path model of parasocial relationship development found no evidence of a relationship. Slightly more promising evidence was found in a cross-sectional survey study performed by Perse and R. Rubin (1989). Although LISREL analysis of their proposed model failed to reveal a direct link between length of exposure and PSI (lambda = 0.027), they were able to find a weak indirect link. Length of exposure was a mild predictor of attributional confidence (lambda = 0.099). Attributional confidence, in turn, was a low to moderate predictor of PSI levels (beta = 0.243). They noted that the low amount of explained variance suggests that "there is much to learn about the development of parasocial interaction" (p. 74).

A major problem, of course, in the above studies is their

cross-sectional nature which cannot directly address development of PSI over time and which leave causal direction questions unanswered. Also, these studies employed measures of overall exposure to TV (or an entire genre). Such a measure is related to, but also different from, exposure to a specific program or character over time. While still utilizing a cross-sectional design, Auter and Palmgreen (1992) found more promising results in a study employing program-specific exposure measures and a PSI measure--the Audience-Persona Interaction Scale--geared to characters in the particular program studied. The multidimensional API measure consists of four subscales: Identification With Favorite Character, Interest in Favorite Character, Group Identification/Interaction, and Favorite Character's Problem Solving Ability. The 22-item scale was administered to 417 undergraduate students after they had been shown an episode of Murphy Brown. Subjects also responded to a 5-point, Likert-type statement about their familiarity with and exposure to the Murphy Brown series. Pearson correlation analysis revealed a positive linear relationship between viewer level of exposure to Murphy Brown and the API Scale and its various subscales: (Identify, r =.14, p = .002; Interest, r = .26, p < .0005; Group, r =.22, p < .0005; Problem, r = .21, p < .0005; total index, r = .28, p < .0005). The results of this preliminary study indicated that a relationship does indeed exist between PSI with program characters and exposure to different numbers of episodes of that program. However, it is still not clear from the cross-sectional data whether exposure leads to

parasocial interaction or vica versa.

Situation Comedy

All programs that fall within the genre of situation comedy share and build upon three elements: recurring characters, regular settings, and developing family relations (Goedkoop, 1983). It has been noted that the most critical element of good situation comedy is the development and interaction of strong characters:

> Since the unit of most television is the series rather than the individual program, television has an advantage over most narrative media. It can build character over time. This is also why TV is not so much a medium of stories as of moods and atmospheres. We tune in not to find out what is happening in the storyline, but to spend some time with well-known friends--the characters of the situation comedy (Goedkoop, p. 4).

Consistency of setting helps to maintain the reassuring familiarity of a visit to a favorite sitcom family's home (Goedkoop, 1983). The regular sets do not have to be of someone's home, but they must be fairly consistent over the run of the program. They become the "home" or regular place that the characters belong. This creates "an intimacy between the actors and their surroundings and between the setting and the audience" (pp. 4-5).

Grote (1983) has suggested that the sitcom is a unique form of comedy in that each episode is independent but not quite complete. Important exposition about characters and relationships and how the situation began is not found in each episode. "The audience is expected to know not only who the characters are, but also where they are and why they are there. There will be exposition to present this week's situation, but not exposition of the relationships and background of the principal characters" (p. 63). Because of this, Grote has stated, the sitcom must be considered in a larger context, at the series level. Audience members must be familiar with several episodes of the series in order to fully comprehend the characters and their interactions. Yet, unlike the soap opera or other serials, it is not crucial to have seen all prior episodes of the program. Indeed, the show can easily be watched out of sequence as they are often aired in syndication.

The situation comedy thus appears to be an apt genre to utilize in the study of parasocial interaction. PSI research suggests that audience-persona relationships develop over time, possibly leveling off as TV personae cease to reveal more and more personal information. The recurring, consistent, characters of the sitcom, forever in the same settings but dealing with new situations each episode, have the opportunity to grow on the viewers--to become familiar. Although individual episodes may not, as Grote (1983) noted, contain the exposition to reveal the depths of character personalities and the intricate relationships between characters, this intimate knowledge of program personae should develop as more episodes are seen. Viewers who are intrigued enough with a particular sitcom to watch multiple episodes should therefore experience increased parasocial interaction with some or all of the program's personae. This should, in turn, increase a viewer's desire to watch still more episodes of the show.

General Hypotheses

Previous work has suggested a number of dimensions that may exist in the audience-persona relationship during television viewing including identification with a persona, interest in a persona and a feeling of group interaction with the "family" of characters on a program (Horton & Wohl, 1956; Nordlund, 1978; Rosengren & Windahl, 1972). All of these factors are represented in the scale used in this study (Auter & Palmgreen, 1992), along with a concern with the manner in which personae solve problems. The latter concern is consistent with Horton and Wohl's observation that PSI can help viewers learn about how to deal with certain real-world situations. Utilizing the multi-dimensional Audience-Persona Interaction Scale, the following hypotheses will be tested in the current study:

H1a: Increased exposure to a comedy program will significantly strengthen audience members' overall parasocial relationship with a favorite program persona (as measured by total scores on the post-viewing API Scale).

H1b Increased exposure to a comedy program will significantly increase audience members' scores on all four dimensions of the post-viewing PSI scale.

H2: Audience members' "parasociability" (as measured by the A. Rubin and Perse [1987] PSI scale) will correlate positively with parasocial interaction with program personae (as measured by the post-viewing API Scale) within and across treatment groups.

A number of cross-sectional survey studies have shown that a person's affinity for television, perception of television as reality, and viewing levels are correlated with viewing for companionship and/or PSI motives (Greenberg, 1974; Perse, 1990; A. Rubin, 1979; 1981; 1983; A. Rubin & Perse, 1987; A. Rubin et al., 1985). This suggests the following hypotheses:

H3a: Affinity for television in general will correlate positively with PSI within and across treatment groups.

H3b: Affinity for television in general will correlate positively with audience members' parasociability.

H4a: Perceived realism of television content will correlate positively with PSI within and across treatment groups.

H4b: Perceived realism of television content will correlate positively with audience members' parasociability.

H5a: Subjects' overall television viewing levels will correlate positively with PSI within and across treatment groups.

H5b: Subjects' overall television viewing levels will correlate positively with their parasociability, affinity for and perceived reality of television in general.

Horton and Wohl (1956) have noted that parasocial relationship development can slow or cease when viewers become too familiar with a persona. Alperstein (1991) has pointed out that the parasocial relationship with a persona/character/actor can transcend a single television series and be based, in part, on past parasocial experience with that persona in other programs and commercials. Therefore, hypothesis six must be considered:

H6: The amount of prior knowledge about an actor/persona will affect parasocial relationship development with that character--within and across treatment groups.

One final hypothesis also lends itself to analysis in the present study. It's been noted that preference for the genre under study appears to affect audience members' level of reaction to programming in experimental settings (Auter, 1991). As the present experiment was limited to using programming from only one genre--situation comedy--it was thought that preference for sitcoms would interact with the main effects under study. Thus:

H7: Development of the audience-persona relationship will be stronger for viewers who prefer the situation comedy genre.

Method

Collection of Stimulus Tapes

Six episodes of a current situation comedy were needed for the experiment. Because the hypotheses focused on audience development of parasocial interaction over repeated exposure to a program, it was felt that the sitcom chosen for this study should be unknown to study participants. As such, any parasocial relationship development would be more easily attributable to the experimental treatment rather than to past experience with a program. A list of 14 programs was provided to a convenience sample of 52 undergraduate students at a large southern university, who were asked to note any of the programs which they had seen and to briefly describe those shows.

Programs were chosen for the checklist based on the authors' perception of their relative obscurity and their quality.

Although obscurity was important, it was felt that certain shows--primarily off-network syndicated programs--were so poorly written or acted that repeated exposure to these programs might engender a strong negative parasocial relationship, or no relationship at all. Programs were also chosen for the list based on their age and the makeup of their ersatz family. Social values, and their reflection in sitcoms, have changed over the years--thus it was felt that a current program should be chosen so that subjects could more easily identify with characters and situations. And in order to be consistent with demographic characteristics of the intended audience of this study, only programs with casts that contained a number of regular Caucasian characters and had both strong male and female characters were selected. Finally, only reality-based situation comedies--such as those centered around home or work environments--were selected.

Three programs were initially chosen as possible candidates for the treatment stimulus. Thirteen percent of the respondents surveyed were aware of the NBC sitcom, Down Home. Only 7% knew of the ABC show, Family Man and a mere 2% were aware of the CBS program, Man in the Family. Videotaping of these programs began in the late Spring of 1991, but all three programs were cancelled before the requisite six episodes could be videotaped. Thus, Evening Shade--recognized by 29% of the convenience sample, True Colors--known by 25% of those surveyed, and Davis Rules--recognized by 21% of the respondents were chosen to be videotaped as the potential stimulus program. Six episodes of each show were videotaped over the Summer and early Fall of 1991.

Subjects

Subjects were recruited from from 10 sections of an introductory communication class at the same southern university in the Fall of 1991. All students (n = 319) were asked to read and fill out a short filter questionnaire to determine their interest in and eligibility for the study. The filter survey briefly outlined the study procedure, noting that subjects would have to participate in two viewing sessions to complete the experiment. Potential subjects were told that they would receive extra credit in their class for the first appearance and $10 for the second appearance. They were then asked to respond to a 5-point, Likert-type question concerning their likelihood to participate in and complete the study. Only students who checked the most likely category were invited to participate. A second question on the filter survey asked students to check off any of 10 sitcoms that they had seen in the past. Evening Shade, True Colors, and Davis Rules were listed, along with 7 other program titles. Of the students most likely to complete the experiment, fewer had seen Evening Shade than True Colors or Davis Rules. Thus, Evening Shade was chosen as the stimulus program.

A total of 119 students had not seen Evening Shade and had indicated that they "definitely would" complete the study. Of these, 88 subjects (74%) actually completed the experiment. Of the total sample, 33 (37.5%) were male, and 55 (62.5%) were female. The subjects were predominantly Caucasian (77.3%) with the next largest racial group being African-American (11.4%). Nine subjects (10.2%) represented other ethnic groups and 1 individual (1.1%) did not respond to the question. Subjects ranged in age from 18 to 34. The mean age was 20 and the median

19. As would be expected in an introductory class, the vast majority of the subjects were freshmen (52.3%). Sophomores made up the next largest group of participants (30.7%), followed by juniors (12.5%) and lastly seniors (2.3%). Two subjects (2.3%) did not note their grade level.

Experimental Treatment

Subjects were randomly assigned to conditions involving either low (two episodes), medium (four episodes), or high (six episodes) exposure to the program Evening Shade. In order to prevent the possibility that varying lengths of television viewing time would affect survey scores, all subjects were exposed to a total of six episodes of situation comedy programming. Subjects in the low exposure treatment viewed one episode each of four sitcoms not under analysis, as well as two episodes of Evening Shade. Subjects in the medium exposure treatment were shown one episode each of two sitcoms not under analysis, and four episodes of Evening Shade. Subjects in the high exposure condition viewed six episodes of Evening Shade. It was felt that all subjects should see an episode of Evening Shade just prior to filling out the survey, thus each treatment ended with an episode of the stimulus program.

Filler programming consisted of one episode each from Down Home, Family Man, Davis Rules, and True Colors. To limit viewer fatigue, commercials were edited out of programs and subjects were asked to attend two sessions, beginning at the same hour exactly one week apart, during which they watched three sitcom episodes each. All sessions were held in the same comfortably furnished room.

In order to prevent the occurrence of systematic ordering effects and to ensure that a subsample in each exposure level viewed each episode of Evening Shade included in this study, each exposure level was divided into six subcells. Subcells of the low and medium exposure level groups varied in the particular episodes of Evening Shade which were shown and in the ordering of those episodes. Subcells of the high exposure level treatment varied in the order in which the six episodes of Evening Shade were played.[1]

An attempt was made to hold subcell sample sizes constant, so the 119 students who originally agreed to participate were randomly divided among the 18 subcell groups so that each run would consist of six to seven individuals. However, due to attrition and last minute changes in student schedules, completed subcell sample sizes ranged from two to eight participants. Attempts were also made to minimize sample size differences across the three treatment levels, despite the fact that it was unclear beforehand exactly how many students would complete the experiment. Of the 88 students who participated in the entire study, 25 completed the low exposure treatment; 31 finished the medium exposure treatment; and 32 completed the high exposure run.

The Post-Viewing Survey

Following the last episode of the second session, students were asked to fill out a survey which contained the API scale, a version of the Rubin and Perse (1987) PSI scale adapted to measure "parasociability," TV and program viewing measures, questions about familiarity with the actors on Evening Shade, and demographic items.

Audience-Persona Interaction Scale. All statements from the 22-item API Scale were placed at the beginning of the survey in a random order. Because many of the items deal with a viewer's favorite character from the program just watched, a cued recall statement first asked subjects to identify their favorite Evening Shade character. This statement consisted of the characters' names and a very brief description of each character in relation to the other characters. Subjects responded to the API Scale statements on a 5-point, Likert-type measure ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). See Appendix A for API Scale items.

Affinity. The 5-item affinity measure developed by Alan Rubin (1979, 1981) was adapted for this study.[2] All items were responded to on a 5-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5).

Perceived reality. A 5-item summated rating scale was adapted (from Rubin, 1979; 1981) and measures how "true-to-life" a subject perceives television to be.[3] Responses to the perceived reality measure were made on the same 5-point scale as to the affinity measure.

Television exposure. Exposure was based on the number of hours of television watched on the average weekday, Saturday, and Sunday. The questions were worded as follows: "On a typical weekday (Saturday/Sunday), how many hours of TV do you watch?" Subjects chose one of five options: "less than an hour," "one to two hours," "three to four hours," "five to six hours," and "more than six hours." Subjects' average daily TV viewing-levels were calculated by multiplying their weekday option choice by five, summing this with the options they chose for Saturday and Sunday TV viewing and dividing by seven.

Genre viewing. Subjects were asked to note how often they watched each of 17 different program types on 5-point scales ranging from "don't watch at all" (1) to "watch very often" (5). Subjects were asked about a variety of television genres including action/adventure shows, soap operas, and situation comedies.

Parasociability. This personality trait was measured with a revised version of A. Rubin and Perse's (1987) parasocial interaction scale. Rather than referring to a subject's single favorite TV character (within or across genres), statements were altered to refer to a subject's parasocial relationship with all of his or her favorite TV characters. In this format, it was believed that the scale would better measure a subject's parasociability, or likelihood to parasocially interact--a personality trait. Like the original A. Rubin et al. 10 and 20-item scales, subjects responded to the adaption used in this study on a 5-point, Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). Responses were summed and averaged across the 10 items. Examples of the items as adapted for this study are: "My favorite TV characters make me feel comfortable, as if I am with a friend;" "I see my favorite TV characters as natural, down-to-earth people;" "I look forward to watching my favorite TV characters on future episodes;" and "My favorite TV characters seem to understand the kinds of things I want to know."

Familiarity with program actors. For each of the five major cast members, subjects were asked to state how well they knew the actor (not the character) by selecting one of the following interval-level responses: "Never heard of her/him before" (1); "heard of the actor but have not seen his/her work" (2); "seen her/him in a few programs" (3); "seen him/her in a lot of programs" (4); and "consider myself a fan of him/her and have seen most of his/her work" (5).

Demographics. Finally, subjects were asked to note their race, gender, age and grade level.

Results

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 dealt with the primary focus of this research, an attempt to show that increased exposure to the program under study would increase audience PSI, as measured by the total API Scale--and by the four subscales. For H1a, a oneway analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed comparing mean API Scale results across the three treatment groups. Mean scores ranged from 3.19 to 3.40. Although they increased linearly across exposure levels, there was no statistically significant difference--$F(2, 85) = 1.50$, $p = .23$.

For H1b, four separate oneway ANOVAs were performed comparing mean scores on each subscale of the API measure across treatment groups. The only statistically significant difference in mean scores was for the subscale, Group Identification/

Interaction--F(2, 85) = 4.03, p = .02. The low exposure group had a mean score of 3.29, the medium-level treatment averaged 3.17 and the high group averaged 3.60. A Tukey-b multiple comparison test revealed that the medium and high exposure groups were significantly different from one another.

Hypothesis 2

It was expected that audience members' parasociability--a personality trait similar to sociability or friendliness--would correlate with their PSI with program characters. This was the focus of hypothesis 2. A Pearson's Correlation analysis revealed a moderate positive correlation between audience parasociability and PSI with characters in this experiment (r = .33, p = .0008).

Three separate within-treatment correlations ranged from .25 to .41. This seems to suggest that the positive correlation between parasociability and parasocial interaction cannot be attributed to one cell of this study, and was not due to experimental manipulation.

Parasociability was found to be positively correlated with Favorite Character's Problem Solving Ability (r = .35, p = .0005), Interest in Favorite Character (r = .29, p = .0034), and Group Identification/Interaction (r = .22, p = .02). Identification with Favorite Character did not correlate with an audience member's parasociability (r = .098, p = .18.)

Hypothesis 3

It was hypothesized that affinity for television also would correlate with parasocial interaction of subjects with program characters, as well as with their general level of parasociability. However, counter to H3a, no significant correlation was found between affinity for TV and PSI (as measured by the total API Scale). A limited, positive correlation was found between affinity for television viewing and parasociability as predicted in H3b (*r* = .18, *p* = .04).

Hypothesis 4

A positive correlation between perceived TV realism and the total API Scale was found as predicted in H4a (*r* =.25, *p* = .01). A series of within-treatment correlation analyses revealed, however, that although the correlation was strong within the low (*r* = .37, *p* = .03, *n* = 25) and medium exposure treatments (*r* = .46, *p* = .005, *n* = 31), it did not reach significance in the high exposure group (*r* = -.07, *p* = .35, *n* = 32).

Separate correlations were run across treatments to determine how perceived realism was related to the subdimensions of PSI. Two of the four API subscales were significantly correlated with audience perceptions of television as realistic: *Group Identification/Interaction* (*r* = .28, *p* = .004) and *Identification With Favorite Character* (*r* = .19, *p* = .04).

As predicted in H4b, perceived realism was also found to be moderately correlated with parasociability, as measured by Rubin et al.'s (1985) scale (*r* = .24, *p* = .01).

Hypothesis 5

Counter to H5a, daily television viewing did not correlate with the total API Scale in this study. Amount of TV viewing was mildly correlated with the personality trait, parasociability (*r* = .19, *p* = .04) as well as with a subject's perception of television as reality (*r* = .19, *p* = .03). Logically, television viewing levels were strongly correlated with affinity for television (*r* = .60, *p* = .00005).

Hypothesis 6

The 52 subjects who picked as their favorite character one of the four most well known actors in Evening Shade (Burt Reynolds, Marilu Henner, Ossie Davis, or Hal Holbrook) were divided into those who knew less about the actor and those who knew more. Categorization was based on a median split of subjects' responses to the prior knowledge item. A 2 x 3 ANOVA was performed with prior knowledge and treatment as the independent variables and the total API Scale as the dependent variable. The main effect for prior knowledge approached statistical significance--$F(1, 46) = 3.51$, $p = .07$. Subjects who knew less about their favorite persona from the experiment had lower API scores ($M = 3.29$, $n = 17$) than those who had greater prior knowledge about the personality ($M = 3.55$, $n = 35$). However, there was no main effect and no interaction effect.

Several additional 2 x 3 ANOVAs were run with prior knowledge and treatment as the independent variables and the API subscales as the dependent variables. The main effect for prior knowledge was significant for the subscale Interest in Favorite Character--$F(1, 46) = 10.66$, $p = .002$. Subjects who knew less about their favorite character had an average Interest score of 3.47 ($n = 17$) while those who knew more about their favorite character scored an average 4.00 ($n = 35$). No statistically significant interaction effects resulted, however.

Hypothesis 7

Finally, because a sitcom was employed as the stimulus, it was expected that regular sitcom viewers would be more strongly affected by the experimental treatments. Subjects responded to a 5-point, Likert-type statement about how often they watched sitcoms. Responses were divided into three nearly equal groups: limited viewing (n = 31), moderate viewing (n = 30), and high viewing (n = 27). Several 3 x 3 analyses of variance were performed to test for an interaction effect between sitcom viewing-levels and treatment on the API Scale or its subscales. No statistically significant interaction effects were found. However, consistent with the results of hypothesis 1, there was a significant main effect for the independent variable, treatment, on scores for the subscale, Group Identification/Interaction--$F(2, 79) = 3.86$, $p = .01$. Amount of sitcom viewing did not directly affect API scores, however.

Discussion

Hypothesis 1

Despite the promising survey results with the API Scale in an earlier work (Auter & Palmgreen, 1992), in the laboratory experiment the only statistically significant difference in mean scores across treatment groups was for the subscale, Group Identification/Interaction. It is probably safe to assume that development of this subdimension of PSI, described by Horton and Wohl (1956) as a feeling of group affiliation, would be easier to measure than development of a relationship with a favorite character/persona. Alperstein (1991) has noted that an actor's persona crosses program boundaries. For this reason, if subjects' in this study had past TV viewing experiences with the actor who played their favorite Evening Shade character, this may have hampered PSI development on three subscales (and thus the total index)--reducing the effectiveness of the experimental manipulation. Ideally, an experiment such as this should utilize programming in which the actors, as well as the characters they portray, are totally unknown to subjects. Although an attempt was made to obtain programming with virtually unknown actors, practical problems intervened--such as the early cancellation of shows that had been selected for use in this study based on this criterion.

In retrospect, it seems clear that subjects who were "fans" of Burt Reynolds and the other primary actors prior to the study would not be expected to show increases in the dimensions which dealt with their individual favorite character--Identification With Favorite Character, Interest in Favorite Character, and Favorite Character's Problem Solving Ability. On the other hand, study participants were excluded if they had seen Evening Shade prior to the analysis. Therefore they could not have been familiar with the group dynamics of this particular mix of personae. As would be expected, these subjects did show increases in PSI based on perceptions of the group interactions. Still, although the high-exposure group had the highest scores on the Group Identification/Interaction subscale, the relationship was not linear.

A variety of procedural constraints, endemic to the experimental methodology in general and to this study in particular, may well have contributed to internal validity problems. Specifically, the construct, exposure to program over time, was not manipulated in the experiment in a way that would reflect the real-world experience. Each group was exposed to a different amount of Evening Shade while holding amount of situation comedy viewing during the experiment constant, and both subjects and stimulus tapes were randomly ordered. However, the basic design of the manipulation--two to six episodes compressed into two sessions only one week apart--may not have sufficiently reflected the real-world process of meeting and interacting with these characters over time on a regular basis. The exposure construct may have been better manipulated if it had been possible for subjects to have returned for six different sessions equally separated in time.

In order to prevent past experience with a persona in another program from interacting with present results, it may be necessary to produce stimulus episodes specifically for use in the study, or use new broadcast or cable programs involving all new characters played by relatively unknown actors. However, a more detailed series of questions concerning past knowledge about a persona in the experimental program, coupled with a larger sample, may resolve the prior experience dilemma.[4]

It is also possible that viewing six episodes--even in the more realistic weekly format--is not enough for many people to develop strong parasocial bonds with personae. It may be necessary to increase the number of episodes shown to some subjects in order to find measurable differences. It must also be noted that subjects in the experiment did not choose the number of episodes of Evening Shade that they wished to watch as they would in the real world based on their viewing motives. Palmgreen, Wenner and Rosengren (1985) cite a number of studies in which audience motives (both gratifications sought and gratifications obtained) correlated with effects of television on viewers. Experiments, by forcing exposure to programming, limit the potential role of audience motivations in the media consumption process. Just how serious this limitation is has yet to be determined.

Despite this experiment's limited ability to examine whether PSI develops over repeated exposure to a persona, some very useful information was derived concerning how viewer attitudes and media use patterns are directly or indirectly related to PSI. The validity of these results are not contingent on the strength of the experimental manipulation of viewing-level, but can be interpreted as results of a cued-response survey study.

Hypothesis 2

As expected, parasociability did correlate with PSI in this experiment. Results support the supposition that the more inclined one is to parasocially interact, the stronger the PSI bond between viewer and personae after the TV viewing experience. The fact that this hypothesis was supported on three of four API dimensions and with the total API Scale clearly suggests that individual differences play a major role in the development of parasocial interaction. Some viewers may not become as strongly attracted to TV personae as others and this may be predicted by parasociability.

Hypotheses 3 and 4

Prior research has suggested that affinity for television and perception of TV as reality correlate with gratifications obtained from viewing TV for companionship/PSI (Greenberg, 1974; Perse, 1990; A. Rubin, 1979; 1981; 1983; A. Rubin & Perse, 1987). Affinity and perceived realism also have been found to predict viewer expectations of PSI in a future viewing situation (A. Rubin et al., 1985). It was therefore expected that these attitudes about TV would correlate with PSI under experimental conditions as measured by the API Scale.

No correlation was found between affinity for TV and PSI. However, a moderate positive correlation was found between perception of TV as real and total PSI, at least in the low and moderate exposure settings. In addition, two of the four API subscales (Group Identification/Interaction and Identification With Favorite Character) were significantly correlated with perceived realism across treatments.

In retrospect, affinity for (or psychological dependency on) television as a medium should not be directly related to a viewer's PSI with characters in a specific program. Perhaps such PSI is related to affinity with the particular program under consideration, but affinity was not measured in such a context-specific fashion in this study. However, a general tendency to perceive TV characters as true-to-life (perceived realism) should enhance a viewer's ability to parasocially interact with the characters in a specific program. This hypothesis received at least partial support in this study.[5]

The fact that parasociability, on the other hand, was positively correlated with both affinity and perceived realism suggests, from a discriminant validity stand-point, that the API Scale and the Rubin et al. (1985) scale measure different constructs, as contended here.

Hypothesis 5

Reported overall television viewing levels did not correlate with parasocial interaction as measured by the API Scale. They were, however, found to be strongly correlated with affinity for television, and mildly but significantly correlated with parasociability and perception of TV as reality. Because viewers obtain a variety of gratifications from watching television, average TV viewing levels may not necessarily correlate with the strength of PSI with characters in a particular program. It is logical, however, and consistent with past research, to find viewing levels to be related to affinity for TV, perception of TV as reality, and the predisposition to parasocially interact.

Hypothesis 6

Based on the logic that past experience with an actor/ persona might dilute the effects of exposure levels, it was expected that significantly different API scores would be found across treatments if prior knowledge about a favorite persona was taken into account. Only 52 of the 88 subjects could be measured on their familiarity with the actor who played their favorite character due to the nature of the questionnaire.[6] When these viewers were categorized based on a median split on the prior knowledge question and two-way analysis of variance performed, the main effect for prior knowledge approached statistical significance for the total API Scale and was significant for the subscale Interest in Favorite Character. No statistically significant interaction effects resulted, however.

Hypothesis 7

Finally, it was felt that preferences for the program genre used in this analysis--the situation comedy--would affect the participants' PSI development, as the experiment was focusing on only one genre and individuals vary in their genre preference. No statistically significant interaction effects were found, however. But, consistent with the results of hypothesis 1, there was a significant main effect for the independent variable, treatment, on scores for the subscale, Group Identification/ Interaction.

As mentioned earlier, the crude measure of genre preference could not take into account preference for the program, Evening Shade. Although the preference measure might have been able to accurately assess differences based on how well subjects' liked sitcoms in general, it was unable to differentiate between subjects who enjoyed watching Evening Shade in the experiment and those who merely tolerated the program in order to complete the study.

Conclusion

Parasocial interaction has been studied as a gratification obtained from media use and occasionally as a predictor of future television viewing. However, the study of the process of parasocial interaction has been very limited to date. Like any communication process, parasocial interaction involves senders, receivers, messages, channels, and feedback. Past research has been focused almost exclusively on cross-sectional survey data from receivers--the audience--who have been studied while removed from the actual viewing context. The time has come to study all aspects of the PSI process--generally and in specific viewing contexts. This can only be achieved by utilizing a variety of research methods and measurement techniques. In particular, longitudinal studies of a panel or even field experimental nature are needed to study the development of parasocial ties over time more directly.

Many unresolved questions about parasocial interaction remain. For instance: How do individual differences in viewer attitudes and personality characteristics affect the parasocial interaction process? How do message characteristics affect audience PSI with program personae? Does a parasocial relationship with a television spokesperson affect the likelihood that an audience member will accept and act on the spokesperson's message? Studies should also be performed to determine how PSI develops in different media channels, how long it takes for a PSI relationship to level off (or even decline), and how viewer-persona interaction (or perceived interaction) enters the picture. Further research should also be performed to determine how important PSI as a viewing motive (or gratification sought) is to media use decisions.

These questions suggest employment of qualitative, survey and experimental methodologies as well as integrating into PSI research more measures of audience needs, motives, beliefs and personality traits. The inclusion of valid and reliable measures of these variables should result in a better understanding of how and why parasociability differs from person to person and how that, in turn, affects parasocial interaction.

There is also a need for development of valid content analysis measures to more accurately determine how message characteristics affect the PSI experience. Some preliminary work has been performed in this area. A very simple measure of Perceived Content Interactivity Level (PCIL) has been developed, allowing program content to be categorized into one of four levels of perceived interactivity (Auter, 1992; Auter & Moore, in press). Initial results suggest that certain performance and production styles are perceived as more interactive than others and significantly affect the audience PSI experience. However, at present the PCIL Index is rather unrefined and needs further development and testing.

After 37 years of study since Horton and Wohl's (1956) seminal piece, a large parasocial interaction research agenda still exists. Past researchers have suggested a number of avenues for future PSI study, and many new possibilities have been suggested here. Perhaps by utilizing the multiple methods approach and incorporating new, more contextual measures such as the API Scale into PSI research, a fuller understanding of the entire parasocial interaction process will unfold.

APPENDIX A

Audience-Persona Interaction Scale

Identification With Favorite Character

(Favorite Character) reminds me of myself.

I have the same qualities as ______________.

I seem to have the same beliefs or attitudes as ______________.

I seem to have the same problems as ______________.

I can imagine myself as ______________.

I can identify with ______________.

Interest in Favorite Character

I would like to meet the actor who plays (played)______________ in person.

If the actor who plays (played) ______________ appeared on another television program, I would watch that program.

I enjoyed trying to predict what __________ would do in the show.

I hoped that ______________ achieved his or her goals in the shows I watched.

I care about what happens to ______________.

I liked hearing the voice of ______________.

Group Identification/Interaction

The interactions between the characters on (TITLE) are similar to my interactions with my friends.

The interactions between the characters on (TITLE) are similar to my interactions with my family.

My friends are like the characters on (TITLE).

I would enjoy interacting with my friends and the characters on (TITLE) at the same time.

While I was watching (TITLE), I felt included in the group of characters on the show.

I can relate to the attitudes of the characters on (TITLE).

APPENDIX A (cont.)

Favorite Character's Problem Solving Ability

I wish I could handle problems as well as __________.

I like the way _______________ handles problems.

I would like to be more like _______________.

I agreed with _______________ most of the time.

Note: Items have been listed here within the four subscales of the API measure. They should be randomly ordered in survey administration.

NOTES

[1] Episode ordering was not random, but rather purposive. Ordering of tapes was done so that no two subcells would consist of the same episodes in exactly the same order. Because episode #626 was a loose continuation of #625, these two episodes were always shown in order when both were used in the same subcell. Although episode choice and ordering varied across subcells for the stimulus program, Evening Shade, they were held constant for filler programming. The same episode of each filler program was used across treatments. It was also felt that lead-in effects into the Evening Shade episodes should be held constant. Thus, for all subjects viewing any filler programming, the episode of Davis Rules immediately preceded the airing of Evening Shade during the first viewing session and the episode of True Colors always lead into the first episode of Evening Shade shown during the second viewing session.

[2] The adapted affinity items are: "I would rather watch TV than do anything else;" "I could easily do without television for several days;" "I would feel lost without television to watch;" "If the TV wasn't working, I would not miss it;" and "Watching TV is one of the most important things I do each day." The second and fourth items were reverse coded.

[3] The perceived reality statements, as adapted for this study, read as follows: "Television presents things as they really are in life;" "If I see something on TV, I cannot be sure it really is that way;" "Television lets me really see how other people live;" "TV does not show life as it really is;" and "Television lets me see what happens in other places as if I were really there." The second and fourth items on the perceived reality scale were also reverse coded.

[4] Another problem with this experiment--small sample size--was also due to budget and time constraints. From an initial optimal sample of 319 college undergraduates, the pool was reduced to 119 participants who volunteered to complete the study. The sample was further reduced to 88 due to attrition, only allowing for approximately 30 subjects per cell. This minimal sample size was reduced even more to 52 when controlling for prior knowledge about a favorite persona--due to an improperly designed survey question--thus reducing the chances of finding a significant difference between treatments.

The reasons for such deficiencies stem from the basic problems with experimental research--a limited amount of time, resources, and money. The experiment took approximately three hours to complete during two outside of class sessions, and required a great deal of orchestration, not only in gathering programming and setting up the experiment room, but in making sure that subjects would show up as promised at the proper time. Although 319 students were originally considered as potential participants, it was necessary that the pool be reduced to a maximum of 100 subjects (regardless of familiarity with the stimulus program) as the research grant awarded for this study was only $1000--$10/subject. Normally, subjects participating in graduate student research are simply awarded extra credit in their classes, but as this experiment took more than twice the average time allotted for such work, students who completed the experiment received extra credit and were paid.

[5] It is useful to note here that perception of TV as reality only correlated with audience PSI in the more limited exposure groups--when viewers knew less about the characters and may have been less likely to "believe" in them and thus "interact" with them. Also, perception of TV as reality was most strongly and significantly correlated with viewers' identification with groups or individuals. The more they believed that TV in general was similar to reality, the more likely they were to "recognize" a personality-type on the screen to be like themselves or someone they knew. They did not, however, necessarily like such characters better simply because they felt that they were more real.

[6] Because *Evening Shade*'s credits did not clarify which actor played which character, only the five most recognizable actor/characters were identified in this question. However, 36 subjects selected their favorite character from supporting role personae. Because the names of these actors were not included in the survey, these subjects had to be dropped from this analysis.

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Media Coverage of Ethical Misconduct in Congress and Its Effect on Formal Ethical Inquiries: A Preliminary Analysis

by

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ABSTRACT

This study offers new insight into the government-press relationship through analyzing media coverage of specific ethical scandals involving members of the United States Congress. Additionally, the effect of such coverage on Congressional ethical inquiries is examined. It was thought that the media may allot more coverage to more prominent members and to scandals involving personal behavior rather than incidents involving office related financial misconduct. It was subsequently hypothesized that an increase in media coverage would be accompanied by an increase in the severity of the punishment issued by Congress. The results indicate that violation type does not influence media coverage. Prominence, however, was found to be a good predictor of media coverage. The subsequent analysis revealed that increased media coverage was correlated with an increase in the punishment rendered by Congress even when controlling for the potentially confounding effect of prominence.

INTRODUCTION

The 1992 election year was marked by an unusually large turnover in Congress coupled with increased support for term limit legislation. These events reflect increasing concern regarding the integrity of Congress as an institution and the behavior of Congressional members. Starting in the early 80s with ABSCAM and continuing into the early 90s with the Keating Five, news reports of ethical scandals in Congress have abounded. Many scholars argue that the media are responsible for the development of negative attitudes about legislators and Congress (Linsky,1986a). Some believe that reports on these scandals are biased and make the problems seem worse than they actually are (Hollstein, 1977; Sorauf, 1988). The support for these beliefs, however, is anecdotal in nature, and limited at best. Additionally, an important concern has been left unaddressed. Much attention has been paid to the response of the public to media portrayals of scandal, but how has media coverage affected the legislators themselves? Particularly, has the press influenced the actions taken against those accused of ethical violations? This study explores the theories and preliminary evidence which may provide answers to these questions.

Libertarian philosophy suggests that the press has been "charged with the duty of keeping government from overstepping its bounds. In the words of Jefferson, it was to provide that check on government which no other institution could provide" (Siebert, 1956, p.51). Most people would agree that the press plays a unique role in the operation of the American government. Disagreement begins to emerge, however, when one tries to define this role. The ability of the press to set the public's agenda is probably the most studied aspect of the government-press relationship. Most studies suggest that the media is successful in alerting the public about the saliency of issues. Research has also indicated that the press sets the agenda for political elites and policy makers (Gormley, 1975; Protess et. al, 1987). There is less support, however, for the ability of mass media to change attitudes. As Cohen put it, the press "may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about" (1963). There is good reason, therefore, to believe the media may have placed the issue of Congressional ethics on both the public and policy makers' agendas (assuming reports on ethics have been prevalent in the media), but it becomes more difficult to predict how Congress may react to such media coverage. The media may influence policy makers directly or indirectly through public opinion. It is possible that both mechanisms are at work to some degree.

In spite of the fact that traditional thought suggests that the media play an important role in checking governmental decision-making and abuses, there has been relatively little research done regarding specific impacts on public policy. This is most likely due to the fact that any impact the media may have is difficult to measure. Most research in this area has relied on case studies of specific policies. Lambeth (1978) surveyed legislators regarding energy policy-making and found that they did not believe that their decisions were influenced by the media. However, Linsky (1986b) points out that some legislators would probably be unwilling to admit to or possibly unaware of any effect the media may have had. Additionally, he and his colleagues (1986c) found that out of 500 former government officials surveyed and 40 federal policy makers interviewed 96 percent said that media had an impact on federal policy, and a majority considered the impact to be significant. There is evidence that investigative reporting, while having only limited effects on the general public is influential in changing the attitudes of policy makers (Protess et al., 1987). Evidence of actual policy changes resulting from specific media coverage has also been found (Linsky et al, 1986; Protess et. al.,1987). While most of the evidence applies to specific incidents, some early literature suggests that the media can affect entire policy areas. Cohen (1963) found that the media played an important role in the development of foreign policy.

The effect of the media on public policy is not universal (Cohen, 1963, Linsky, 1986b). There are many factors which appear to influence the effect the media will have. These factors can be evaluated in terms of how they might apply to Congressional ethical scandals. First, the timing of the publication in relation to political exigencies is important. If the coverage comes at a sensitive time it is likely to have a greater effect on policy outcomes

(Linsky, 1986b; Protess et. al., 1987). For example, if an exposé on Congressional indiscretions comes at a time when legislators are considering ethical standards legislation, the media's influence would be stronger. It is difficult, however, to make across the board predictions regarding the timing of coverage of individual incidents. The obvious prediction is that if articles about the scandal come at a time that the ethics committee is deliberating a verdict it would be more likely to have an effect. Since ethics inquiries are often prolonged, it is difficult to pinpoint the crucial times that the media might exert its influence. Yet, the general application of this principle suggests that any media coverage that would occur during the span of the investigation has the potential to influence the verdict.

The second factor that contributes to media's influence is the amount of collaboration between journalists and policy makers during the development of the issue (Cohen, 1963; Protess et. al., 1987). This means that the more journalists and policy makers have worked together on uncovering the facts and nuances of an issue, the greater the effect the media will have on the forthcoming policies. It is unclear whether this is due to the positive, trusting relationship that often develops when individuals work together, or if it is just due to the fact that the policy-makers have become dependent on the information the media have uncovered. The first explanation seems unlikely in the case of ethical inquiries. If anything, the relationship between legislators and the media is adversarial, not collaborative, regarding this matter.

The second explanation seems more plausible. Cohen (1963) suggests that in the case of foreign policy, Congressional members have been dependent upon the media. He argues that it is difficult for legislators to gain information about foreign policy issues and that their main source is the press. Therefore, they often base their decisions on information obtained from the media. He does not argue, however, that this is true for all issues. Ethical scandal is often uncovered by the media, but this is not always the case. Increasingly, legislators initiate accusations as a combat tool against political opponents (Ginsberg & Sheffter, 1990). Other violations are uncovered through review processes mandated by ethical reform legislation. Ironically, it is often the media that become dependent upon the legislators for information

(Cook, 1989). Even when the media first uncover an ethical concern, members of Congress are not dependent upon this information, but rather can initiate their own investigation. It is very possible, however, that the decision to initiate an investigation may be influenced by the media.

Another factor that mediates the effect of the media is whether or not the government's press and public relations people were involved early in the policy-making process (Linsky, 1986b). As stated earlier, legislators and their aides are taking an increasingly active role in shaping the media's coverage of issues. This is especially true in Congress. Members claim they initiate more than 50 percent of the stories about themselves (Linsky, 1986b). Of course, they do not reveal their own scandalous activities, but good public relations people can help mitigate the effect of negative press. The effectiveness of a good press strategy can only be truly evaluated on a case by case basis. It has also been found that while negative coverage which involves elected officials is particularly likely to affect policy making, members of Congress are less likely to see negative press as a problem than are members of the executive branch (Linsky, 1986b). Also, in one survey study it was found that reports which attacked a particular Congressman for ethical violations were discounted by both the public and other members of Congress (Lambeth, 1978). It is possible that individuals (especially those who are well-educated as legislators tend to be) distrust these reports because they perceive them as sensationalized journalism. Yet, again it is likely that individuals are affected, but they are just not aware of it.

The last condition which may interact with media effects is the level of public and interest group pressure (Linsky, 1986b). The media's influence is often counterbalanced by other factors. Ethical conduct, however, is not a partisan issue. Most individuals agree that ethical violations warrant action of some kind. People may, on the other hand, disagree regarding when a violation has occurred and what punishment should be imposed. Here is where an important question emerges. Does the media's coverage of ethical scandals influence the direction and severity of the verdict made by members of Congress?

To answer this question other factors influencing media coverage and congressional action must be explored. Every ethical violation can be evaluated along two dimensions, the nature of the scandal and the nature of the individual involved. Legislators become involved in various types of scandal. Some involve financial misconduct while others are of a more personal nature. Certainly, the type and severity of the misconduct can and probably should influence the verdict Congress renders. The nature of the violation, however, can also affect media coverage. Sabato (1991) argues that "...the classic American scandal centering on financial impropriety...has been overtaken by new types appropriate to our culture in the media age-gaffes, 'character' issues, and personal life-questions" suggesting that the media would allot more coverage to a personal scandal than to financial issues. It becomes evident that violation type may influence the Congressional verdict directly, or indirectly through disproportional media coverage. Therefore, any effort to ascertain the relationship between media coverage of an ethical violation and the punishment imposed by Congress must attempt to control for the intervening effect of violation type.

While many might argue that characteristics of the scandal should be the only influence on the Congressional verdict, the nature of politics suggest that individual characteristics also may play a role. Certain members of Congress may be treated differently than others. More specifically, prominent (active or powerful) members might be treated differently than lesser members. Congress might treat prominent members more leniently because of the power they wield; or more severely, possibly under the assumption that they should know better. The press might allot more coverage to prominent members because they believe readers would be more interested in these individuals. It is therefore hypothesized that the media will allot more coverage to scandals that involve prominent members than to scandals involving lesser members. Again, since prominence may influence both media coverage and the Congressional verdict, statistical analyses must take these potential relationships into account.

Many factors which affect media coverage and policy makers have been discussed as they relate to the issue of ethical inquiries in Congress. Many important factors have emerged. It is hypothesized that characteristics of the violation and the individual involved may influence media coverage. These same characteristics may also affect Congressional inquires. The purpose of this study is two fold. First, it will attempt to uncover what factors influence media coverage of ethical scandals. Second, an effort will be made to determine whether a relationship between media coverage and Congressional verdict exists when controlling for violation type and the prominence of the member involved. Three hypotheses have been introduced. Hypothesis 1: Scandals involving personal misconduct will receive more coverage than those regarding financial misconduct. Hypothesis 2: Scandals involving prominent Congressional members will receive more coverage than those involving lesser members. Hypothesis 3: An increase in media coverage is related to an increase in the severity of punishment rendered by Congress.

Many important questions about media coverage of ethical scandal in Congress have been raised. Are certain types of scandals treated differently than others? Are certain people treated differently than others? If the media is to fulfill its role as government watchdog, it is important to know if they are reporting consistently and responsibly as well as what effects this coverage may have.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND DESIGN

The review of the literature suggests many factors which contribute to the effect the media may have on policy making. The primary concern of this study is determining what effect media coverage of an individual ethical scandal may have on the inquiry undertaken in Congress. More specifically, does increased media coverage of an incident result in a more severe punishment? The predictions regarding media's effect on ethical issues are unclear. It appears that some conditions exist which would be expected to strengthen its effect, while others would mitigate any effects. Measuring all of these factors and their relative effects would be difficult if not impossible. It is possible, however, to examine the correlation between media coverage and policy outcomes to try to uncover any net effects. Fortunately, for the purposes of this study, the reasons why the press might influence policy-making are not as important as simply determining the existence and strength of the press-policy relationship.

We can gain more information regarding the nature of this relationship by attempting to isolate factors which may affect both media coverage and Congressional decision-making. Two aspects of each ethical violation were isolated for analysis: the type of violation, hereafter referred to as VIOLATION; and the nature of the individual involved which shall be termed PROMINENCE. These variables may affect the Congressional verdict (PUNISHMENT) directly or indirectly through media coverage (MEDIA). This analysis reveals many potential relationships which are demonstrated in Figure 1.

Measurement of the Variables

In this study, the correlation between media coverage of specific ethics violations in the 1980s and the severity of punishment rendered by Congress was examined. For each scandal, the number of articles found in the New York Times Index was used to measure MEDIA. Crelinsten (1989) offers support for this measure. One common measure of media coverage is content analysis, in which vocabulary counts are made of key words as they appear in articles (See Stone & McCombs 1981). This first involves finding the articles to be examined. One option, therefore, might be to look at all articles on each ethical scandal in Congress, identifying and counting key positive and negative words. However, since past studies have found that the media tend to only tell us what issues to think about rather than what attitudes to have, it seems that the tone of each article may be less important than the mere existence of each article. Beniger (1978) explains this idea further. He argues that media content can be utilized as a social indicator relying on the Greenfield index of agenda-setting. Since strong correlations have been found between media content and the public agenda, the number of articles published on an issue can be used as a proxy for the issue's prevalence on the public's agenda. In this study, the number of articles is not used as a social indicator, but rather as an indicator of how important a particular ethical violation is perceived to be according to the media.

A list of individuals who were accused of ethical violations in the 1980's was compiled from information found in Congressional Quarterly's Guide to Congress (1991). According to this information, from 1980 to 1990, 44 members of Congress became involved in ethical scandals. Geraldine Ferraro and those involved in the ABSCAM scandal were not included in this study, bringing the total number of individuals examined to 34.[1] The number of articles that appeared in the New York Times Index about each of these incidents was then recorded and utilized as a measure of MEDIA. This first required looking up entries under the name of each individual from the time the scandal emerged to the day it was resolved. Isolating entries that dealt specifically with the scandal was more subjective. Many names were followed by subheadings on ethics but articles on the scandals also appeared under other subheadings. Under each subheading a date for each article was listed. Each subheading could be found as a main heading elsewhere in the index. The articles under each main heading were listed chronologically and included summaries of the content of the articles. It was difficult to determine key words to identify articles on each scandal. However, the summaries were relatively straightforward, so that a valid and reliable measure was obtained. The New York Times acts as a good measure of media coverage because it is thought to be fairly representative of the media at large. More important, it is a favored source of news among members of Congress. In fact, while legislators may not find time to watch television, they do tend to be avid newspaper readers (Weiss, 1974).

The New York Times is fairly representative of general media coverage concerning most issues. It is likely, however, that it will allot more coverage to ethical scandals which concern New York representatives than coverage found in other newspapers. Therefore, the analysis on scandals was performed once including incidents involving representatives from New York (since many members of Congress do rely on The New York Times as a news source) and once absent these individuals to eliminate any bias the paper might exhibit.

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[1] The 9 individuals involved in the ABSCAM scandal were eliminated from analysis because it was feared the number of individuals involved and the unique nature of the scandal made it an atypical case which might skew the results. Geradine Ferraro was also excluded since the suspect violation was tied closely to her widely publicized vice-presidential campaign .

Information on the punishment rendered was also obtained from information provided in the Congressional Quarterly's Guide. The measure of PUNISHMENT was created by ranking the severity of each punishment on a scale from 0-5 in the following manner: 0 = no investigation or investigation dropped; 1= individual was found guilty, but no punishment was imposed; 2 = no punishment was imposed, but the individual was required to correct the wrong-doing (i.e. pay back money illegally obtained); 3 = reprimand, reproval, rebuke; 4 = censure or denounced; 5 = removal or resign. It was decided that resign would be coded the same as removal since most individuals only resigned when removal was imminent or when it was perceived that party and constituent support was lost due to the scandal. Those inquires that were dropped because the member was not re-elected or because the member resigned to take another political office (as opposed to inquires that were dropped due to insufficient evidence) were eliminated from the portion of the study dealing with effects on punishment. Factors affecting the media coverage of these individuals could still be evaluated. Since the issue was not resolved, however, Congressional response to media coverage could not be determined. This resulted in 6 individuals being dropped from this portion of the analysis. A seventh individual was dropped because the verdict was still pending at the time the information was collected. Therefore, while 34 individuals were evaluated regarding factors affecting media coverage alone, only 27 individuals were evaluated in all analyses. While this number begins to become questionably small, it is important to remember that the total population of individuals to choose from was only 44. The typical fear of the lack of representativeness associated with a small sample is not a problem here. Based on these measures, the reasoning becomes that if there is no correlation between the number of articles about a particular incident (MEDIA) and the ensuing punishment an individual receives (PUNISHMENT), then the media can be said to have no effect on the verdict.

Unfortunately, if a correlation is found it is not proof that the media actually affect punishment. The relationship could be spurious due to other variables which affect both media coverage and policy-makers. Insight into this possibility might be gained through the analysis of the other two variables. It is hypothesized that media coverage and/or verdict may be influenced by the type of violation. More specifically, it is suggested that the media may allot more coverage to incidents involving personal misconduct such as drug use or sex scandals. Congress may be influenced by this coverage or may be influenced by violation type independent of any media bias.

Information on the nature of the conduct was also obtained from the 1991 edition of Congressional Quarterly's Guide to Congress. VIOLATION was operationalized as a nominal variable by dividing the ethical violations into two types - Financial misconduct which includes any kind of office-related scandal such as incidents where members obtained payment of some kind in exchange for votes or other favors. This also includes financial dealings which were not necessarily illegal, but were not clearly documented as they should have been, or when members used Congressional funds or other perks of office to further their own self-interest or the interests of friends. The second type of violation is Personal misconduct referring to incidents involving alcohol, drugs, or sexual indiscretions. A few incidents involved both violation types. In these cases a determination was made as to which type appeared dominant in the inquiry. To perform regression analysis, VIOLATION was made a dummy variable with 0 = Financial misconduct and 1 = Personal misconduct. The research question then becomes does VIOLATION influence MEDIA?

Another interesting question that has been posed is whether certain individuals are treated differently than others by the media and/or Congress. One hypothesis is that more prominent members will be treated differently than lesser members. Operationalizing PROMINENCE is difficult. Positions held in Congress, chairmanships held, etc. might be utilized. Perhaps a better measure is the general media coverage a member receives. This offers a good indication of which members the media feel are prominent, and it is also likely to reflect those who are more active in Congress (thus providing more material for the media). Thus the research question posed is does PROMINENCE influence MEDIA? The New York Times Index was again utilized. The number of articles on each individual during the twelve months prior to the emergence of the scandal was utilized as a measure of prominence. Table 1 provides a list of all the individuals involved in scandals in the 1980s which documents all the variables included in this study. Many potential relationships have been proposed. While the correlational study presented here cannot, prove which relationships exist. It can provide more insight into which ones appear more probable.

RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

Two sets of analyses were performed. First, a regression equation was calculated to examine VIOLATION and PROMINENCE as predictors of MEDIA. Results indicate that PROMINENCE was significantly related to MEDIA regardless of the inclusion of incidents involving representatives from New York(See Table 2). This supports the second hypothesis that scandals involving prominent Congressional members will receive more coverage than those involving lesser members. This is a logical finding considering PROMINENCE was measured by media coverage in the year prior to the violation. A member of Congress who generally receives more media coverage will likewise receive more coverage regarding any ethical scandals in which they become involved. A review of the data, however, reveals an interesting finding. Most individuals received more coverage regarding the scandal than they did regarding all issues in the previous year. This suggests that the media may allot more coverage to scandals than they do to other issues.[2]

The evidence, however, does not bode well for the first hypothesis regarding a potential relationship between verdict type and media coverage. It appears that modern day media do not allot more coverage to personal scandals than to more traditional scandals of

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[2] The number of articles on the scandals, however, often spanned a number of years. To truly analyze this hypothesis, equivalent time periods or a ratio of time period to number of articles per issue would be necessary.

"financial impropriety." These results are contrary to the speculations made by Sabato (1991). It appears that the characteristics of the individual, rather than characteristics of the violation, are better predictors of media coverage.

The relationship between MEDIA and PUNISHMENT was then examined. A significant correlation was found (See Table 3a). Next, analysis was performed to insure that this correlation was not spurious due to the high correlation between MEDIA and PROMINENCE. When a partial correlation coefficient was calculated controlling for PROMINENCE the relationship remained significant (See Table 3b). Although, VIOLATION was not found to be significantly related to MEDIA (implying that VIOLATION could not create a spurious correlation between MEDIA and PUNISHMENT) a partial correlation coefficient was calculated which controlled for both PROMINENCE and VIOLATION. The correlation between MEDIA and PUNISHMENT again remained significant (See Table 3c).

This supports the findings made by Protess et al (1987) and others which suggest that reporting, particularly investigative reporting, on specific issues may influence the attitudes and the resulting actions taken by policy makers. Yet, in spite of the controls included in this study, the findings only reveal that a correlation exists between media coverage and the ensuing Congressional verdict. This does not prove that it was the media coverage itself which actually influenced the legislators' actions.

While this study examined the role of verdict type on media coverage, the two categories were overly broad. It is still likely that the media and members of Congress simply agree on the severity of the violation. The media, therefore, may allot more coverage to specific scandals they perceive as severe. Likewise, members of Congress may independently make the same determinations and thus assign a more severe punishment. While the analysis presented here is clearly limited, it indicates that the media and members of Congress do have some agreement regarding their perceptions of ethical violations. The literature suggests that this agreement may be do to the media's influence on the opinions and subsequent actions of policy makers.

CONCLUSIONS

The media is said to play an important role in society by acting as government watchdog. The nature of this role,however, remains undefined. In the wake of many government scandals, the role of the media regarding the issue of government corruption is again in the public eye. The purpose of this study was first, to uncover what factors influenced media coverage of individual ethical scandals involving members of the United States Congress, and second, to determine whether this coverage influenced members of Congress in terms of the punishment they imposed on the individuals involved in the scandals.

Many factors may influence how much coverage the media give to a particular scandal. This study isolated two such variables for analysis. It was hypothesized that both violation type and the prominence of the individual involved would influence the amount of coverage a specific scandal receives. A member's prominence was found to be a good predictor of media coverage. More articles are written about scandals involving representatives who are already prominent in the media than scandals involving lesser members. No relationship was found between violation type and media coverage. Contrary to the beliefs of many, modern media do not allot any more coverage to personal scandals than they do to those involving financial misconduct. These results, however, were not disappointing. In fact, this is an important discovery that many may find encouraging.

Lastly, it was found that an increase in media coverage was correlated with an increase in the punishment a Congressional member received. This correlation held even when controlled for the effects of member prominence and verdict type. While these results cannot prove that increased media coverage actually caused increased punishment, they do indicate that the press and members of Congress are in agreement regarding the perceived importance of individual ethical violations. The overall findings of this study suggest that if the media does influence the verdict imposed upon ethics violators, verdicts are not biased against personal misconduct due to disproportional media coverage. It is likely, however, that if Congress relies on the media as a guide, more prominent members may receive more severe punishment.

Even if a causal relationship between media coverage and policy outcomes could have been proven, we would still not know why it exists. The results do not lend support to certain theories over others. This study offers preliminary findings which suggest the areas which require additional study. Further research should attempt to refine the measures utilized here. A more detailed measure of violation type and severity would be particularly beneficial. The scope of the study might also be expanded to include other variables that influence both the media and policy-makers.

Figure 1

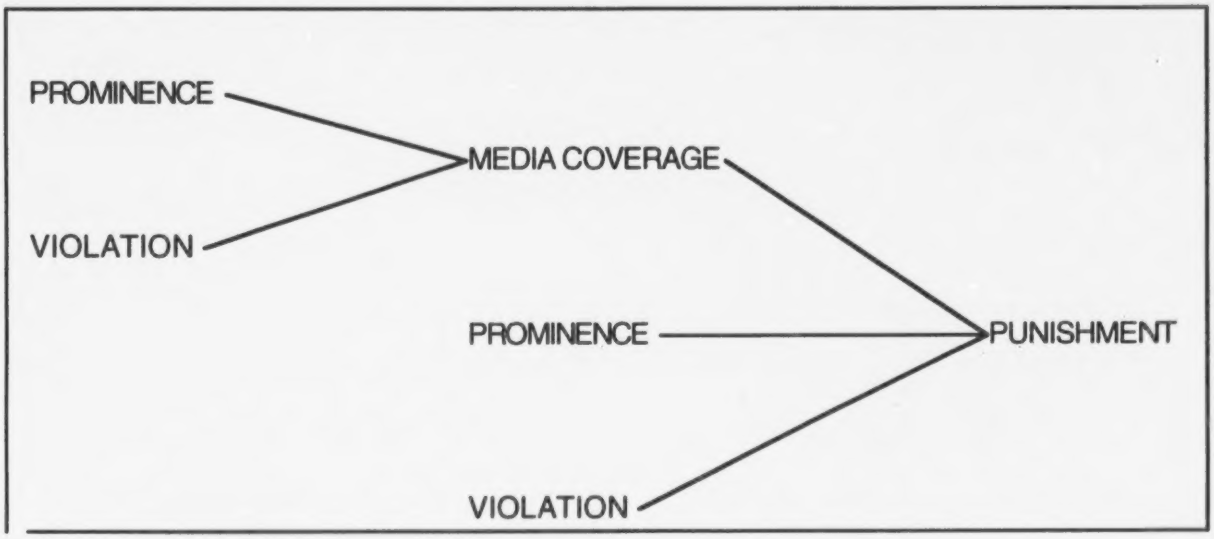
PROMINENCE
MEDIA COVERAGE
VIOLATION
PROMINENCE
PUNISHMENT
VIOLATION

TABLE 1

Name	Year	Violation Type	Punishment	Media Coverage	Prominence
Wilson, Charles	79-80	Financial	Censured	11	05
Jenrette Jr., John W.*	1980	Financial	Resigned	41	
Kelly, Richard*	1980	Financial	Defeated	20	
Lederer, Raymond F.*	80-81	Financial	Resigned	16	
Murphy, John M.* (NY)	1980	Financial	Resigned	31	
Murtha, John P.*	80-81	Financial	Invest.Dropped	13	
Myers, M. J."Ozzie"*	1980	Financial	Expelled	31	
Thompson, Frank*	1980	Financial	Defeated	27	
Williams Jr., Harrison*	80-82	Financial	Resigned	38	
Hinson, Jon	1981	Personal	Resigned	09	01
Crane, Daniel	82-83	Personal	Censured	03	02
Richmond, Fred (NY)	1982	Financ/Person	Resigned	35	06
Studds, Gerry	82-83	Personal	Censured	03	02
Ferraro, Geraldine*(NY)	83-84	Financial	InvestDropped**	35	
Hansen, George	83-84	Financial	Reprimand	11	02
Hatfield, Mark O.	1984	Personal	Invest.Dropped	11	12
Daniel, Dan	85-86	Financial	Repay	02	00
St. Germain, Fernand	85-87	Financial	Invest.Dropped	03	07
Biaggi, Mario (NY)	86-88	Financial	Resigned	118	14
Boner, Bill	86-87	Personal	InvestDropped**	02	00
Fiedler, Bobbi	86-87	Financial	Invest.Dropped	11	02
Ford, Harold E.	86-89	Financial	Pending**	07	00
Murphy, Austin J.	86-87	Personal	Reprimand	05	01
Oakar, Mary Rose	86-87	Financial	Repay	02	00
Rose, Charlie	87-88	Financial	Reproval	02	01
Stallings, Richard	1987	Financial	Reprimand	00	01
Sunia, Fofo	87-88	Financial	Resigned	02	00
Swindall, Pat	87-88	Financial	Defeated	07	00
Coehlo, Tony	88-89	Financial	Resigned	02	07
Dyson, Roy	88-90	Financial	Defeated	04	00
Garcia, Robert (NY)	88-89	Financial	Resigned	34	04
Wright, James	88-89	Financial	Resigned	142	42
Bates, Jim	89-90	Personal	Reproval	01	00
Durenberger, Dave	89-90	Financial	Denounced	28	05
Fauntroy, Walter E.	89-90	Financial	InvestDropped**	03	01
Frank, Berry	89-90	Financ/Person	Reprimand	22	08
Gingrich, Newt	89-90	Financial	Guilty part, no pun.	17	13
Savage, Gus	89-90	Personal	Guilty/No Punish.	12	00
Strangeland, Arlan	89-90	Financial	Defeated	00	00
Lukens, Donald E.	89-90	Personal	Resigned	18	00
Flake, Floyd (NY)	90-91	Financial	Invest.Dropped	14	01
D'Amato, Alphonse	90-91	Financial	Rebuked	15	49
Sikorski, Gerry	1990	Financial	Invest.Dropped	00	00

*indicates that the scandal was entirely deleted from analysis
**indicates not included in the punishment analysis only.

Table 2

Regression of VIOLATION and PROMINENCE on MEDIA including New York

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Coefficient (Beta)	T
VIOLATION	-2.224319	10.411296	-.214
PROMINENCE	1.625832	.4101022	3.964*
(Constant)	8.129113	5.650562	1.439

R SQUARE = .35
*P <.001

Regression of VIOLATION and PROMINENCE on MEDIA without New York

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Coefficient (Beta)	T
VIOLATION	2.854557	8.376962	.341
PROMINENCE	1.477422	.327132	4.516*
(Constant)	3.309955	4.774589	.693

R SQUARE = .43
*P <.001

Table 3

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN MEDIA AND PUNISHMENT

Coefficient	Controls
a. .3405*	NONE
b. .3432*	PROMINENCE
c. .3769*	PROMINENCE AND VIOLATION

*p<.05

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CONNECTING MEDIA USE WITH CAUSAL ATTRIBUTION

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CONNECTING MEDIA USE WITH CAUSAL ATTRIBUTION

ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of social groups, world views, and media use in causal attribution, with special reference to teenage parenthood problems. It was found that media use was the most significant predictor for both internal and external attributions. However, the total time spent on the media could not significantly predict causal attribution. Instead, the impact of media use on causal attribution was mainly via the use of particular medium channels and content genres. The results show that watching television news had a positive impact on the perceived importance of the internal causes of teenage parenthood. Watching television soft content enhanced the perceived importance of external causes; in contrast, reading newspaper news led to a disregard for external causes.

Connecting Media Use with Causal Attribution

This paper examines possible social foundations upon which people make causal attribution for social problems. We argue that membership in social groups, primitive beliefs about the on-going world, and dependence on the mass media are three major components of the foundation of attribution. An analysis of attribution for the problem for teenage parenthood was conducted to investigate the influences of social group, world view, and media use on attribution.

Literature of social cognition has well documented that people tend to make more internal (or dispositional) attribution rather than external (situational) attribution, which is called fundamental attribution error (Ross, 1977; Hewstone, 1989). However, the overwhelming findings of fundamental attribution error were mostly obtained from laboratory studies. It is less clear from past literature whether fundamental attribution error is still prevalent when people make causal attribution for social problems in everyday life. More importantly, which social factors affect attribution-making has not attracted much research attention and lacks a systematic investigation.

The need to search for the social foundation of ordinary people's attribution was not addressed until a decade ago, when British attribution scholars brought their attention to it. These scholars conceived of attribution as a function of group and societal circumstances (Hewstone, 1983; Jaspars, Fincham, and Hewstone, 1983). They argued that attribution is social in nature in three aspects (Weary, Stanley, and Harvey, 1989). Firstly, attribution activity is common to all members of a society. As stated by Heider (1976, p. 18), "[w]henever you cognize your environment you will find attribution occurring." Secondly, as attribution is part of our cognition of social environment, the common objects of attribution are people, interpersonal relationships, or societal events. Thirdly, attribution tends to be made on the basis of information gained in social interaction. The social nature of attribution led these scholars to explore the foundation of attribution in society.

These scholars adopted the concept of social representations developed by Moscovici (1981, 1984, 1988) to study what attributions are, why they are made, and where they come from (Jaspars and Hewstone, 1989). Social representations refer to knowledge and ideas shared by the members of a social category through everyday communication and social interaction. This concept is similar to the concept of schema in that both are conceptualized as existing knowledge structures guiding information processing. However, social representations differ from schema or other cognitive constructs in two ways. First, social representations theory emphasizes the transformation of social knowledge. It examines how knowledge is transformed and represented through different social communication channels, such as mass media. Second, social representations theory focuses on widespread social beliefs rather than individual beliefs. It points to the importance of the fact that beliefs or thoughts are shared among individuals within a social boundary. Empirical research has found that different religious groups hold different social representations of AIDS (Echebarria and Paez, 1989) and that social representations of drugs vary across different social groups defined by their proximity to the world of drugs (Echabe et al., 1992).

In view of the notion that social representations are anchored in social group, attribution scholars propose social group to be the major context of forming attributions. Their hypothesis that group membership has an impact on attribution-making was consistently supported in their empirical inquiry (c.f. Hewstone, 1989). Specifically, research into the attribution for social problems has found that people with different political affiliations perceive the causes of unemployment and poverty in different ways. According to Furnham (1982a, 1982b), in Britain, people endorsing the Conservative Party tended to emphasize individualistic or dispositional causes for both unemployment and poverty. In contrast, supporters of the Labor Party tended to rate societal causes as more important than individualistic ones.

However, the group variations in attribution was not found in Gaskell and Smith's (1985) research into the perception of British youth about unemployment. All of their respondents were inclined to provide external explanations. Gaskell and Smith suspected that their result was a consequence of the influence of media account. During the period of their study, most British newspapers attributed unemployment to societal factors such as the problem of the welfare system. Thus, their respondents had already been framed by the media account. Although they did not provide any empirical evidence regarding the media account, Gaskell and Smith implied that mass media have the potential to direct people's attention to external explanations.

Gaskell and Smith's speculation about media impact on attribution is resonant with media effects research. A great array of effects research suggests that the social perceptions of individuals are largely shaped through the mediated representations of mass media (Cohen and Adoni, 1990; Gamson, 1988, 1992; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorielli, 1986; McLeod, Pan, and Rucinski, 1989; Neuman, Just, and Crigler, 1992; Signorielli and Morgan, 1990). Living in the symbolic environment constructed by mass media, individuals are very likely to make attribution for societal events based on media account.

The findings of Iyengar's (1987, 1990, 1991) experimental studies support that mass media are capable of framing the attribution of audiences. Iyengar found that when television presentations framed societal issues or events as a general outcome, the audience tended to attribute responsibility to society-at-large. However, when television framed a story as a particular instance of broad social issues the audience tended to assign responsibility to the individual. Iyengar (1991) explained the mechanism of the media's framing effect on attribution in terms of psychological constructs: salience and accessibility. In brief, exposure to media increases the overall salience of media account, and therefore media account becomes more accessible to the audience when making attribution.

It should be noted that Iyengar's findings were obtained from experiments in which the amount of exposure was not stimulus; thus, exposure was equal among his subjects. However, media exposure is not constant across audiences in the real-world setting. Media effects research has documented that audiences have different kinds of dependence on mass media (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976). Therefore, it is worthwhile to examine whether various media use affect attribution-making for social issues in different ways.

McLeod, Sun, Chi, and Pan (1990) have examined the relationships between causal attribution for drug issue and a variety of media-use measures. They did not find any significant associations between attribution and the measures of watching television, such as time spent watching television, exposure and attention to television news, exposure and attention to television entertainment programs, and the like. It was reading news stories in newspapers that significantly predicted certain types of attribution for drug issue. Although three types of attribution were used in their study, the one similar to external-internal attribution (i.e., the "other vs. individual" factor in their paper) could not be predicted by any measures of media use.

Gurevitch and Levy (1986) also indicated the limited power of media use for predicting the audience's causal explanations for both war/peace and unemployment issues. Neither news media exposure nor media dependence was significantly associated with the causes of unemployment provided by the audience. Nor was the total media exposure significantly related to the reasons of the government's involvement in the wars of foreign countries. However, differential dependence on the news media was significantly associated with the reasons in war issues, even controlling for gender, age, education, and total news media exposure.

The results of both McLeod et al.'s (1990) and Gurevitch and Levy's (1986) studies indicate that the overall association between media use and attribution for social issues seems weak. Their findings apparently suggest that people's dependence on mass media matters little to their attribution. On the other hand, their results imply that the relationship between dependence on the media and attribution is not constant across all aspects of media use. Rather, such relationship varies with the aspects of media use. Mass media may affect audiences' attribution-making via their use of certain medium channels or content genres. Not all of the channels and genres make a substantial contribution to attribution. Moreover, if this notion is correct, the total time spent reading newspapers or watching television should be less associated with attribution-making, for the time spent measure represents an overall media use which cannot indicate variations in using specific programs or genres.

The discussion so far points out social group and media use as two mechanisms of the societal influence on attribution. In addition to them, widespread belief such as world view is likely to be another social basis for attribution. Theory of social representations points to the fact that social beliefs can come into play when people make explanations (Fraser & Gaskell, 1989). As stated by Feather, "[t]he explanations that people hold for events are not neutral beliefs that are the end products of unbiased, rational information processing. They are linked to other beliefs, attitudes, and values within the total belief system in ways that give meaning and consistency to the events that occur." (Feather, 1985, p. 885; Hewstone, 1989, p. 223). World view, as primitive belief about the on-going world, may make impact on people's understan [illegible] social phenomena and, furthermore, on attribution-making for social problems.

Lerner and Miller's (1978) "Just World Hypothesis" throws some light on the relationship between world view and attribution. The "Just World" implies that ordinary people tend to perceive the world as a just and orderly place where people get what they deserve. Thus, Lerner and Miller hypothesize that people who hold the "Just World" view tend to make dispositional attribution for other people's failure, because these people are convinced that good people earn rewards, and that misfortune only happens to those who deserve it.

However, people may have different views of the world rather than believing the world to be just. It has been found that "Fatalistic World" and "Knowable World," together with the "Just World," are widespread world views (Amor, McLeod, and Kosicki, 1987; McLeod, Kosicki, Pan, and Allen, 1987). "Fatalistic World" refers to a pessimistic view of the world, which is full of passivity, detachment, and an assertion of unchangeable fate. "Knowable World" is defined as "a positive view of the world, where coordinated mental effort can pay off both in understanding and action" (Amor, McLeod, and Kosicki, 1987, p. 10).

People holding the "Knowable World" view may be similar to those holding the "Just World" view in making more internal attribution (dispositional attribution), for they believe that the world can be understood or improved if one makes an effort. However, people holding the "Fatalistic World" view may be contrary to those holding the "Just World" view in attribution-making. Because they don't believe that the existing world can be changed through their efforts, people holding the "Fatalistic World" view may attribute the responsibility of a social problem to external rather than internal factors.

The following part of this paper is an investigation of the roles of social group, world view, and media use in attribution-making for the problem of teenage parenthood. In light of the ideas and arguments surveyed above, eight research hypotheses were postulated:

H1: People from different social groups differ in their attribution.

H2: Believing that the world is just (i.e., "Just World") is positively associated with internal attribution.

H3: Believing that the world can be understood if one makes an effort (i.e., "Knowable World") is positively associated with internal attribution.

H4: Believing that the world is unchangeable (i.e., "Fatalistic World") is positively associated with external attribution.

H5: Compared with genre use, the total time spent contributes less to predicting attribution-making.

H6: Compared with media reliance, the total time spent contributes less to predicting attribution-making.

H7: Not all of the content genres have significant effects on attribution via the audience's use.

H8: Not all of the medium channels have significant effects on attribution via the audience's use.

This study also examined the competitive effects on attribution among social group, world view, and media use. Specifically, we asked which of these categories is more powerful in accounting for attribution, and what is the unique contribution of media use to attribution after controlling for social group and world view. Because we lacked empirical evidence from previous literature to formulate hypotheses for these questions, our research purposes here were partly exploratory.

Method

Data

The data for this study came from a cross-sectional survey of media use and causal attribution for social issues. The social issue selected for this particular analysis is teenage parenthood. The data were collected through telephone interviews with 509 adult residents in Dane County, Wisconsin during late October of 1989. Respondents were selected by modified random-digit dialing procedures which ensure access to unlisted numbers. Interviews were conducted by trained graduate students and seniors enrolled in an advanced research methods course. All completed interviews were verified by professional interviewers and project staff.

The sample was composed of 228 males (44.8%) and 281 females (55.2%). The mean age was 40 years old. Forty-five percent of the sample had college degree. Annual household income on the average was in the range of $20,000-30,000. Half of the respondents were married (52.8%). One-third were single.

People who were divorced or widowed constituted the rest of the sample. For details please see **Appendix 1**.

Measures

Causal Attribution. Instead of assuming that an individual's attribution falls into either category of internal or external attribution, this study presumed that people may attribute a social problem to both internal and external causes but give them different weights. Internal and external attributions were hence conceptualized as two dimensions of causal attribution rather than as two poles of one dimension.

Internal attribution for teenage parenthood problems was operationalized as attributing teenage parenthood to the dispositional tendency of teenagers or factors that teenagers are able to resist or remove if they intend to do so. Four indicators were used to measure the internal causes of teenage parenthood: lack of knowledge about sex among teenagers, tendency toward risk-taking among teenagers, self-esteem of teenagers, and peer pressure. External attribution for teenage parenthood problems was operationalized as attributing teenage parenthood to environmental factors that teenagers are unable to change by themselves. Five indicators of the external causes were used: schools that the teenagers attend, problems of the welfare system, ethnic backgrounds of the teenagers, lack of commitment from political leaders, and areas where the families live.

Respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of each of the above nine causes in terms of a 10-point scale (1 = "not important at all" and 10 =

"extremely important"). A principal-components factor analysis with a varimax rotation was employed to examine the structure of the respondents' attribution. The result of factor analysis shows that the nine indicators of causal attribution are loaded on two factors, as we expected (c.f. **Table 1**). The first factor "External Attribution" accounts for 32.1% of the variance among the original correlations, and the second factor "Internal Attribution" accounts for 12.7% of the variance. The factor scores of internal attribution and external attribution were used as two dependent variables in our analysis.

Social Group. The demographic variables of gender, age, education, annual household income, marital status, and religious affiliation were used as the indicators of group membership that may influence attribution for teenage parenthood. The reason for using demographic variables as surrogates of social group is that an individual's social location is clearly reflected in his demographic characteristics. Our analysis was intended to examine the differences between categories of each demographic variable, such as different religious groups. For each demographic variable, we categorized our respondents in the following way -- (1) for gender: males vs. females; (2) for age: below 31; 31-50; more than 50; (3) for education (years of schooling completed): 12 years or less; 13-15 years; college graduate; more than 16 years; (4) for annual household income: $30,000 or less vs. more than $30,000; (5) for marital status: married; single; divorced/widowed; (6) for religion: Catholic; Protestant; other religious groups; no religious faith.

World View. Three types of world view were measured by a battery of ten closed-ended questions with a five-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree"). Items tapping the "Just World" included denying unequal chances, denying the painfulness of life, affirming the fairness of life, and affirming the overall improvement in life. "Fatalistic World" was measured by four items stating the futility of challenging one's fate, life as a series of meaningless events, life as disconnected from events elsewhere, and life as generally untroubled. "Knowable world" was composed of two items endorsing the efficacy of planning and the active study of the world to understand life or the world. Consistent with our expectation, the result of a principal-components factor analysis with a varimax rotation displays three factors which account for 51.4 percent of the total variance. For the details of item wordings and factor structure, please see **Appendix 2.**

Media Use. Media use was operationalized into three dimensions: time spent, genre use, and media reliance. The measures of time spent included time spent reading newspapers and time spent watching television on a daily basis. Genre use contained four genres: newspaper news, newspaper soft content, television news, and television soft content. The use of each genre was constructed from two sets of questions asking the respondent's exposure and attention to a variety of newspaper contents and television programs. The measurement of media reliance was obtained by a survey question asking the respondents to rank five communication channels, including television, newspaper, family and friends, etc., in terms of the frequencies of their use. We then transformed the answers about television and newspapers into two respective 5-point scales. For instance, for a respondent who ranked television as the most often used medium and newspapers as the fourth often used one, his score on the television scale would be 5 and on the newspaper, would be 2.

The measurement of media use in this study focused on newspapers and television, because newspapers and television not only have a large audience but provide a variety of contents to the audience. Radio and magazines, compared with newspapers and television, have a smaller audience which often does not represent the entire population. Furthermore, most people do not use radio and magazines as frequently as they use television and newspapers. Their use of radio or magazines tends to be selective, such as only listening to music channels or only reading news magazines.

Analysis

To test our hypotheses, a series of one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the differences of attribution among social groups, while Pearson's correlations were used to examine the associations between attribution and each of the world-views and media-use indicators. Multiple regressions were performed to explore the competitive effects of social group, world view, and media use on attribution. The unique contribution of media use to attribution was further examined through hierarchical multiple regressions. For the dummy variables of multiple regressions (i.e., gender, marital status, and religion), female, single, and Catholic were used as the group for comparison.

Results

Table 1 reports the descriptive statistics of the importance of each cause rated by our respondents. It indicates that the respondents rated all the internal causes as more important than the external causes. All of the mean scores of the internal causes were much higher than the mean values of the external causes. The lowest mean of the internal causes was 7.33, which was still higher than the highest mean of the external causes, 6.25. This suggests that, in the case of making attribution for teenage parenthood, the tendency of fundamental attribution error existed in our sample.

Our first hypothesis regarding the differences of attribution among social groups did not gain much support according to one-way analysis of variance. As **Table 2** shows, the null hypothesis that there are no differences between social groups could not be rejected for most of the social-group variables, except for gender and age.

For internal attribution, the F value for gender was highly significant ($p = .0046$). It indicates that there was significant difference between males and females in making internal attribution for teenage parenthood. Males tended to perceive the internal causes of teenage parenthood as less important (mean = -.14); conversely, females tended to emphasize the importance of internal causes (mean = .11).

For external attribution, the F value for age groups was highly significant ($p = .0012$). However, an F test did not reveal the significance of differences among age groups on a pair-by-pair basis. In order to determine how the three age groups differ, Duncan's New Multiple Range Test was used. This test is often used to determine which of the differences between group means are significant and which are not. The results revealed that the mean for the older-adults group (= .27) was greater than the mean for the middle-aged group (= -.15), and this difference was large enough to be significant at the .05 level of confidence. No other differences between age groups were significant. In other words, older adults tended to consider the external causes of teenage parenthood as more important, which was significantly different from middle-aged adults, who tended to perceive the external causes as less important. However, there were no significant differences between young adults and either of the above two age groups.

The bivariate relationship between attribution and world view is displayed in **Table 3**. As predicted, the "Knowable World" view positively correlated with internal attribution ($r = .14, p < .01$), and the "Fatalistic World" view positively correlated with external attribution ($r = .10, p < .05$). Contrary to our prediction, the "Just World" view did not significantly correlate with internal attribution. Nor did the "Just World" correlate with external attribution. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was rejected but Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4 were supported.

It should be noted, however, that the significant association of "Fatalistic World" view with external attribution was eliminated after controlling for social group and the other two world views through multiple regression. The regression coefficient of "Fatalistic World" was in the predicted direction but did not approach conventional significant levels (beta = .07, $p > .05$; c.f. the column "M_1" in **Table 6**). But, the effect of the "Knowable World" view on internal attribution remained highly significant (beta = .17, $p < .01$; c.f. the column "M_1" in **Table 5**). Such significant effect did not diminish even after further controlling media use. Of the three world views, the "Knowable World" view turns out to be the strongest predictor of attribution.

Multiple regressions were mainly used in this study to examine the competitive effects of world view, social group, and media use on attribution. To determine which of them is most powerful, we firstly compared the percentages of the variance of attribution that each of the three predictors accounted for by performing six multiple regressions. That is, internal attribution was regressed separately on social group, world view, and media use, as was external attribution (c.f. **Table 4**). Secondly, we performed two standard multiple regressions (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1989) to examine the simultaneous effects of social group, world view, and media use on internal or external attribution (i.e., the last column in **Table 5** and **Table 6**).

The results show that, for internal attribution, media use had the most significant and substantial prediction compared with social group and world view. As shown in **Table 4**, genre use had a larger adjusted R square (= 2.6%, $p < .01$) than social group or world view (adjusted R^2 = 1.1% & 1.4%, respectively). Genre use together with the total time spent and media reliance accounted for 2.0% of the variance of internal attribution in total, which was significant at the level of .001. At the same time, the result of simultaneous regression in the last column of **Table 5** indicates that television news use had the highest regression coefficient (beta = .17, $p < .01$), whose magnitude was greater than those statistically significant coefficients of social group and world view.

Likewise, media use was more important as the basis of external attribution than social group or world view. Judging from the adjusted R squares in **Table 4**, media use accounted for more variance of external attribution than social group or world view (adjusted R^2 = 3.7%, $p < .001$ for all media-use measures; adjusted R^2 = 3.1%, $p < .001$ for genre use). In regard to their simultaneous effects, the last column of **Table 6** shows that the statistically significant coefficients of media use were not much different from those of social group in terms of their strength of prediction (beta = .14, -.13 & .11 for media use; beta = .14 & -.16 for social group).

Our analysis further examined the unique contribution of media use to attribution in terms of the variance accounted for. We used hierarchical multiple regressions to determine if addition of information regarding media use to the model containing social group and world view improves the prediction of attribution. **Table 5** and **6** show that adding all measures of media use (i.e., time spent, genre use, and media reliance) significantly improved the prediction of both internal and external attributions (incremental R^2 = 3.1% & 4.4%, respectively).

Of the three dimensions of media use, genre use was the most important contributor to attribution. Specifically, genre use alone significantly accounted for a 2.9% increment of the variance of internal attribution and a 3.2% increment in external attribution. However, the total time spent improved neither the prediction of the variability of internal attribution nor that of the external attribution; nor did media reliance. The incremental R^2s of both the total time spent and media reliance were rather small, rather close to each other, and not different from zero. These findings support our fifth hypothesis, which specified that compared with genre use the total time spent has less contribution to predicting attribution. However, the findings also reject hypothesis 6, which stated that compared with media reliance the total time spent contributes less to predicting attribution.

The final stage of analysis was to test our last two hypotheses regarding variant effects of content genres and medium channels on attribution. We firstly examined their zero-order correlations with attribution and then their regression coefficients after controlling for social group and world view. The reason we did not test Hypothesis 7 and 8 based on the regression coefficients in Table 5 and 6, which were controlling for the other media use variables, is that there existed moderate correlations among more than half of the media-use variables. By moderate we mean the magnitude of a correlation is between .21 and .40.

As **Table** 7 shows, zero-order correlations indicate that internal attribution significantly correlated with the use of television news and television soft content, but did not correlate with the use of newspaper news and newspaper soft content. External attribution correlated with the use of newspaper news, television news, and television soft content, except the use of newspaper soft content. After further controlling social group and world view, television news was the only genre having significant effect on internal attribution via the audience's use. In a similar vein, newspaper news and television soft content were the two genres having significant effects on external attribution via the audience's use. The results support our seventh hypothesis, which specified that not all of the content genres have significant effects on attribution via the audience's use.

In regard to the effects of different media on attribution, we found that reliance on television had a positive effect on internal attribution, which remained significant even controlling for social group and world view. In contrast, regressions show that reliance on newspapers had no significant effects on attribution, although its zero-order correlation with external attribution reached statistical significance. The differential effects of television reliance and newspaper reliance stated here support our last hypothesis, which specified that not all of the medium channels have significant effects on attribution via the audience's use.

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper explores the role of social group, world view, and media use as the social foundation of causal attribution with special reference to the problem of teenage parenthood. Internal attribution and external attribution were conceptualized as two dimensions of causal attribution rather than two poles of one dimension. The results show that the internal causes of teenage parenthood were rated as more important compared with the external causes. However, the perceived importance of internal causes was significantly different between gender groups. Males tended to perceive the internal causes of teenage parenthood as less important; conversely, females tended to think of them as more important. In addition, those perceiving that the world can be improved or understood through personal effort, that is, those holding the "Knowable world" view, tended to be more concerned with the internal causes of teenage parenthood. It was also found that watching more television news and having more reliance on television both enhanced the perceived importance of the internal causes.

External attribution for the problem of teenage parenthood seems to be formed on a social basis quite different from that of internal attribution. Our findings suggest that age, rather than gender, was a significant predictor of external attribution (beta = .14, $p < .05$ in the last column of **Table 6**). Older adults tended to have much more concern with the external causes; however, the middle-aged group tended to think of the external causes as less important. Reading newspaper news was associated with perceiving the external causes of teenage parenthood as less important; however, watching television soft content enhanced the perceived importance of the external causes.

When comparing the predictive power of social group, world view, and media use, media use emerged as the most significant predictor for both internal and external attributions. Media use accounted for more variance of attribution than social group and world view. This finding was sustained even after controlling for social group and world view. Conversely, the variance of attribution accounted for by either social group or world view was rather small, and failed to reach conventional statistical significance.

Such results have two suggestions. First, mass media are capable of making impact on audiences' engagement in attribution-making via their use of the media. Second, the media's impact on causal attribution not only can compete with but may override the influences of social group and widespread social belief such as world view.

Additionally, our findings provide another way to look at the potentialities of the media's impact on attribution-making. Iyengar's (1991) studies have already documented that attribution of responsibility varied with the nature of television's framing. What our small study can add to it is the potential role of media use in attribution. To be specific, media use can be likened to a channel, or a bridge, by which the social representations in media contents get their way to meet audiences. It is within this channel that cognitive representations have interactions with social representations transmitted by media institutions, and which in turn lay the foundation for audience's attribution in everyday life.

However, the impacts of media use on attribution-making seem to be mainly via particular medium channels and content genres instead of all of the channels and contents. Our results show that the total time spent, which represents the overall use of the media, could not have any substantial prediction of attribution in terms of the variance accounted for. Rather, genre use exhibited significant predictions for both internal and external attribution. More importantly, the relationships between attribution and the use of different content genres were not uniform. Watching television news was the dominant genre use in directing the audience to be more concerned with the internal causes of teenage parenthood. Also, the use of television news and television soft content headed the audiences toward thinking of the external causes as very important. In contrast, reading more news stories in newspapers resulted in a disregard for the external causes of teenage parenthood.

Although media reliance was not a substantial predictor for attribution in terms of the variance accounted for, it was found that, after taking into account the impacts of social group and world view, the more audiences rely on television, the more likely they are to think of the internal causes of teenage parenthood as very important. Judging from the findings of both media reliance and genre use, we found that the use of television played a more significant role than the use of newspapers in attribution-making. However, whether this was due to the different presentation formats of newspapers and television or related to the messages conveyed by the two media could not be answered in this study.

Further research into the differential effects on attribution between newspapers and television in terms of both media features and the contents of coverage should be carried out. Such studies could penetrate more deeply the process of interaction between media and audiences, and help us learn more about how mass media have impact on attribution-making.

Since the issue selected for investigation in this study is the problem of teenage parenthood, it would be risky to generalize what we have found so far to the attribution for other social problems. There may be different compositions of the social foundation of attributions for different social problems. In order to get a fuller picture, this paper thus calls for further exploration into the role of mass media in attribution for other issues.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Factor Analysis of
Causal Attribution for Teenage Parenthood:
Principal Components Analysis with Varimax Rotation

	Factor 1 External Attribution	Factor 2 Internal Attribution	Mean	S.D.
External Attribution				
Problems of the welfare system	.71	.16	5.90	2.74
Area where the family lives	.68	.07	6.25	2.49
School that the teenagers attended	.65	.21	6.16	2.47
Ethnic background of the teenager	.65	.14	5.24	2.70
Lack of commitment from the political leadership	.63	.18	4.97	2.71
Internal Attribution				
Peer pressure	.13	.76	8.14	1.91
Tendency toward risk-taking	.08	.71	7.33	2.14
Self-esteem of teenagers	.16	.59	7.77	2.07
Lack of knowledge about sex	.18	.44	7.49	2.46
Eigenvalue:	2.89	1.15		
% of variance accounted for:	32.1	12.7		

% of total variance accounted for by two factors: 44.9

n = 509

Table 2
Internal Attribution and External Attribution
for Teenage Parenthood by Social Groups:
Analysis of Variance Summaries

	Internal Attribution				External Attribution			
Social Groups	Mean	Mean Square between groups	Mean Square within groups	F	Mean	Mean Square between groups	Mean Square within groups	F
Gender								
Male	-.14				-.03			
Female	.11				.03			
		8.00	.99	8.11**		.41	1.00	.41
Age								
18 - 30	.01				.04			
31 - 50	.07				-.15			
51 or more	-.18				.27			
		2.21	1.00	2.22		6.70	.98	6.85**
Education								
12 years or less	.06				.09			
13 - 15 years	-.01				.12			
College	-.04				-.17			
Post-college	-.04				-.12			
		.35	1.00	.35		2.58	.99	2.60
Annual Income								
$30,000 or less	-.01				-.02			
more than $30,000	.02				.02			
		.13	.97	.14		.19	1.03	.18
Marital Status								
Single	-.11				.06			
Married	.08				-.01			
Others	-.03				-.09			
		1.87	1.00	1.88		.61	1.00	.61
Religion								
Protestant	.08				-.01			
Catholic	-.03				.04			
Others	-.12				.01			
None	-.09				-.06			
		1.02	1.00	1.02		.22	1.00	.22

Note. -- Indices of Internal and External Attributions are factor scores; their mean values in the total sample are zero.

$n = 509$

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Table 3
Zero-order Correlations between Attribution and World Views:
Pearson's Product-moment Correlations

	Internal Attribution	External Attribution
Just World	- .00	.04
Knowable World	.14**	.03
Fatalistic World	.00	.10*

n = 509
* p < .05
** p < .01

Table 4
The Variance of Attribution Accounted for
by Social Group, by World View, and by Media Use:
Standard Multiple Regressions

	Internal Attribution			External Attribution		
	R^2	Adjusted R^2	p	R^2	Adjusted R^2	p
Social Group	2.9%	1.1%	n.s.	3.3%	1.5%	n.s.
World View	2.0	1.4	n.s.	1.2	0.6	n.s.
Total Time Spent	0.4	0.0	n.s.	1.1	0.7	n.s.
Genre Use	3.3	2.6	<.001	3.9	3.1	<.001
Media Reliance	0.7	0.3	n.s.	0.9	0.5	n.s.
Time Spent, Genre Use, & Media Reliance	3.8	2.0	<.001	5.2	3.7	<.001

n = 509

Table 5
Predicting *Internal* Attribution for Teenage Parenthood: Multiple Regression Analyses

Predictors	Models				
	M_1	M_2	M_3	M_4	M_5
Social Group					
Gender (female=0)	-.12**	-.12**	-.11*	-.13**	-.12*
Age	-.07	-.08	-.11*	-.08	-.10
Education	-.07	-.06	-.09	-.07	-.09
Income	-.01	-.01	-.01	-.00	-.01
Marital (single=0)					
Married	.10	.12*	.10	.09	.11
Others	.03	.05	.04	.03	.05
Religion (Catholic=0)					
Protestant	.04	.04	.05	.04	.05
Others	-.02	-.02	-.01	-.03	-.01
None	-.02	-.02	-.01	-.02	-.01
World View					
Just World	-.02	-.03	-.02	-.03	-.03
Knowable World	.17**	.17**	.15**	.17**	.15**
Fatalistic World	-.01	-.01	.01	-.01	.01
Media Use: Time Spent					
NP Time Spent		-.05			-.05
TV Time Spent		.07			.02
Media Use: Genre Use					
NP News Use			-.01		.01
TV News Use			.18**		.17**
NP Soft Content Use			-.04		-.03
TV Soft Content Use			.00		-.00
Media Use: Media Reliance					
Reliance on Newspaper				.02	-.00
Reliance on Television				.09*	.02
R^2:	5.7%**	6.2%**	8.6%**	6.5%**	8.8%**
incremental R^2:		0.5%	2.9%**	0.8%	3.1%*

Note. -- The table reports standardized regression coefficients.
Incremental R^2 refers to a comparison with the R^2 of M_1.

n = 509

* p < .05

** p < .01

Table 6
Predicting *External* Attribution for Teenage Parenthood: Multiple Regression Analyses

Predictors	Models				
	M_1	M_2	M_3	M_4	M_5
Social Group					
Gender (female=0)	-.04	-.04	-.01	-.03	-.00
Age	.14**	.12*	.14**	.15**	.14*
Education	-.07	-.06	-.06	-.07	-.07
Income	-.05	-.05	-.02	-.04	-.02
Marital (single=0)					
Married	-.08	-.08	-.08	-.09	-.10
Other	-.14*	-.14*	-.14**	-.14**	-.16**
Religion (Catholic=0)					
Protestant	-.05	-.05	-.04	-.05	-.04
Others	.01	.01	.01	.00	.01
None	-.01	-.01	-.02	-.02	-.02
World View					
Just World	.05	.05	.02	.04	.03
Knowable World	.03	.03	.03	.04	.03
Fatalistic World	.07	.07	.06	.07	.06
Media Use: Time Spent					
NP Time Spent		.05			.11*
TV Time Spent		.06			-.07
Media Use: Genre Use					
NP News Use			-.09		-.13*
TV News Use			.11*		.14*
NP Soft Content Use			-.09		-.10
TV Soft Content Use			.09		.11*
Media Use: Media Reliance					
Reliance on Newspaper				-.06	-.02
Reliance on Television				.05	-.03
R^2:	4.1%	4.4%	7.2%**	4.7%**	8.5%**
Incremental R^2:		0.3%	3.2%**	0.6%	4.4%**

Note. -- The table reports standardized regression coefficients.
Incremental R^2 refers to a comparison with the R^2 of M_1.

n = 509

* p < .05

** p < .01

Table 7
Effects of Media Use on Attribution

	Internal Attribution		External Attribution	
	zero-order r	beta-in[a]	zero-order r	beta-in[a]
Time Spent				
NP Time Spent	- .04	- .04	.08*	.06
TV Time Spent	.04	.06	.08*	.02
Genre Use				
NP News Use	.03	.04	- .09*	- .10*
TV News Use	.17**	.17**	.09*	.08
NP Soft Content Use	.02	- .00	- .06	- .09
TV Soft Content Use	.08*	.06	.14**	.11*
Media Reliance				
Reliance on NP	- .01	- .01	- .07*	- .07
Reliance on TV	.09*	.09*	.08*	.06

[a] A "beta-in" is a regression coefficient after controlling for social groups and world views, but without entering any of the other media-use variables into the regression equation.

n= 509
* p < .05
** p < .01

Appendix 1

Descriptive Statistics of Social Groups Variables

Variable	Mean	S.D.	%
Gender			
Male			44.8
Female			55.2
Age	39.80	15.49	
Education /Years of Schooling	14.60	2.67	
Income			
Less than $10,000			17.3
$10,000 - 20,000			20.8
$20,001 - 30,000			19.8
$30,001 - 40,000			15.3
$40,001 - 50,000			8.3
$50,001 - 60,000			4.9
$60,001 - 70,000			6.3
More than $70,000			2.2
Don't Know/No Response			5.1
Marital Status			
Single			31.2
Married			52.8
Others			16.0
Religion			
Protestant			41.7
Catholic			28.5
Others			10.6
None			19.3

n = 509

Appendix 2

Factor Analysis of the World Views: Principal Components Analysis with Varimax Rotation

	Factor 1 Just World	Factor 2 Fatalistic World	Factor 3 Knowable World
Just World			
Most people do not get an equal chance in their life.	-.79		
Life for many people is painful and dangerous.	-.78		
In general, life treats most people fairly.	.69		
Life is generally getting better for most people.	.47		
Fatalistic World			
What will be, will be--there's not much we can do about changing fate.		.70	
There are lots of things that happen in the world that have no cause or purpose.		.59	
Things going on halfway round the world don't have much impact on what's going on in this community.		.58	
On the whole, most people live untroubled life.		.52	
Knowable World			
Intelligent planning can change what at first seem to be unavoidable catastrophes.			.73
There are patterns in what's going on in the world that we can understand if we keep trying to learn about them.			.68
Eigenvalue:	2.67	1.41	1.06
% of variance accounted for:	26.7	14.1	10.6

% of total variance accounted for by three factors: 51.4

n = 509

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Support for media and personal expressive rights: development of parallel scales

by

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Communication Theory and Methodology Division.

ABSTRACT

Support for media and personal expressive rights: development of parallel scales

by
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University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Paper presented at the annual convention of Association for Education in
Journalism and Mass Communication, Kansas City, Mo., August 1993.
Communication Theory and Methodology Division.

To measure the perceived relationship between media rights and personal expressive rights, parallel scales were developed. Items on the thirteen-item scales were derived from previous freedom of expression surveys and issues that have been considered recently in courts and by public opinion. Using a sample of 231 subjects, the two scales were tested for reliability and validity. The media rights scale produced a coefficient alpha of .82, and the personal rights scale had a coefficient alpha of .83. Personal rights received more support than media rights. The scales were divergent from social criticism and independence constructs. Item-total correlations and inter-item correlations suggest that the parallel scales meet psychometric requirements.

More research needs to be done to further validate the scales. However, the study suggests that the parallel scales would allow public opinion researchers to quickly and accurately assess the relationship between expressive rights.

Although free speech and a free press have been guaranteed rights in the United States for more than two centuries, little is known about how the public perceives the strength of the relationship between these rights. Journalists and communications scholars sometimes assume that the public needs to be educated about the inherent links between the two freedoms,[1] but no research has been conducted to date that attempts to examine public opinion on this issue. Sporadic research on expressive rights issues has estimated public support for topical rights, but none has yet compared directly support for media practices with support for similar kinds of speech rights. This study presents the development of parallel media rights and personal expressive rights scales to attempt to measure the perceived relationship between the two types of rights.

In the past few years, certain kinds of expressive rights have been the focus of much public debate. Court cases involving flag-burning, cross-burning, abortion protests and offensive song lyrics have fired controversy across the country. Public support, or a lack thereof, for First Amendment rights does not in itself have the power to effect substantive legal changes in those rights. It is necessary, however, to understand the effect that public opinion can and frequently does have on the practice of expressive rights. Letters to the editor, telephone trees and boycotts can chill what certain societal groups say or what the media publish -- arguably as much as any libel law. What effect these kinds of negative messages have on their audiences' support for other expressive rights has yet to be determined. In other words, the extent to which people generalize from one type of expression to another is unknown. Because some members of the public are willing to exercise their own freedom of speech to quell the rights of others, however, it appears that the basic premises of the First Amendment are often misunderstood. As Robert Wyatt noted, "Americans *believe that they believe* in the First Amendment, until they are confronted with expression that runs counter to the grain of their beliefs" (Wyatt, 1991, p. 35; emphasis in original). This statement is a broad generalization, but research to date has not provided enough insight to narrow it.

---

[1] The need for newspapers to inform the public about the relationship between personal expressive rights and media rights guaranteed by the First Amendment was a major topic of discussion at The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center's first seminar on Nov. 4, 1992 (Nashville, Tenn.).

To be sure, journalists perceive the public to be less than supportive of First Amendment rights. A reading of the opinions of some prominent journalists serves to exemplify the attitudes of the profession. Columbia Journalism Review editor James Boylan writes that journalists "see the public as a weak and vacillating guardian of that First Amendment right in which the press is most interested" (Boylan, 1991, p. 42). (Ironically, this comment suggests that journalists are not necessarily any more consistent than the public in their support for expressive rights.) Similarly, John Seigenthaler -- former editor and publisher of the Nashville *Tennessean* and currently the chairman of The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center -- differentiates journalists and the general public:

> "Those of us in journalism recognize that our Founding Fathers had a vision of a society that welcomed controversial speech. We must recognize, however, that this society today does not understand or appreciate that vision" (Seigenthaler, 1992, p. 35).

Research has suggested that people are indeed more supportive of their own individual rights to free speech than of media rights (Miller, Andsager, & Wyatt, 1992). (The differential cannot be accurately assessed because the items used in this survey were not parallel.) It is likely that people perceive free speech rights to be more personally relevant than media rights.

Research into support for free expression and other civil liberties dates back more than 50 years, and it remains a hot topic in social science research. It is difficult to draw accurate conclusions about American support for expressive rights over time because the data lack uniformity (Erskine, 1970). An extensive study of national public opinion surveys conducted over a 50-year period found that very few questions on support for civil liberties remained consistent for more than a couple of survey periods (Page & Shapiro, 1992). Studies suggest, however, that the public tends to be inconsistent in supporting personal rights, perhaps because surveys have most often addressed expression issues relevant to the social and political milieu of the time. Again, it seems likely that when an issue is debated hotly -- especially in a political setting, as was the flag-burning issue during the 1988 presidential campaign -- people may have less opportunity to elaborate on that issue for themselves without being distracted and misled by rhetoric.

A clearer picture emerges from comparison of the only survey questions that have been consistent over time. Support for freedom of speech for extremists is the one item that has remained a salient issue in survey after survey, undoubtedly due in large part to the classic Stouffer (1954) study on communism. For example, more than three-fourths (77%) of the respondents in a survey conducted during World War II wanted to curtail the rights of people to make speeches against certain races in the United States (Cantril, 1951). Before 1950, 49 percent was the highest portion of respondents who would support the expressive rights of extremists (Erskine, 1970). Between 1950 and 1960, that number decreased to 29 percent, and it fell to 21 percent after 1960. This is a stark contrast to the 97 percent of respondents who said in 1940 that they believed in freedom of speech (Erskine, 1970).

One survey designed to measure the relationship between political tolerance and support for civil liberties found that people differentiate sharply between different types of speech, with speech critical of the American system of government receiving most support and speech designed to incite an audience to violence getting the least support (Gibson & Bingham, 1982). Other surveys have asked anywhere from three to 58 questions designed to measure support for specific rights (i.e., Immerwahr & Doble, 1982; McLeod et al., 1991, 1992; Wilson, 1975; Wyatt, 1991); each of these studies found a wide range of support among the rights. The same is true for media rights (Andsager, 1992).

Sex has been a problematic variable in predicting support for freedom of expression because it has not been consistent. The lack of conclusive findings about the relationship between sex and support for expressive rights is due primarily to the fact that only a few of the studies to this point have included this variable. As for support of individual rights of free speech or personal freedom, some research has found negligible differences between the sexes (Christenson & Dunlap, 1984; McLeod, Steele, Chi, & Huang, 1991; Prothro & Grigg, 1960). More recent studies have shown that men are significantly more supportive of expressive rights than women (Miller, Andsager, & Wyatt, 1992), and there are differences in the way the sexes support various media practices (Andsager, 1992).

Several studies have found that political conservatism significantly, negatively affected support for civil liberties (Bobo & Licari, 1989; Miller, Andsager, & Wyatt, 1992). Wilson (1975) also notes that people who consider themselves liberal are more likely to allow "unpopular minority views" to be expressed.

These examples suggest that it is not enough merely to ask about support for rights in a few scenarios, a practice that only blurs the picture of public opinion because it fails to provide respondents with any cognitive context. The problem with the traditional approach to measuring support for expressive rights is the fact that a few survey items assessed separately fail to reflect an individual's attitude toward expressive rights. Any number of intervening variables can affect responses to single items. To better measure support for expressive rights, a reliable scale needs to be developed to attempt to elicit the construct.

Scales for personal rights and media rights would allow a broad array of items to be summed into indexes, which would provide insight into the attitudinal component behind support for free speech and a free press. Moreover, such scales that are composed of parallel items will allow for direct comparison of support for media rights with support for personal rights; in order to measure the perceived links between free speech and free press, it is necessary to use parallel situations. Otherwise, the relationship may be obscured by the artifacts of dissimilar rights.

Although the previous research comparing support for media and personal rights dealt with nonparallel items, it is possible to extrapolate from the findings. As mentioned above, Miller, Andsager, and Wyatt (1992) found that personal rights received much more public support than media rights. The same finding, to a lesser extent, should emerge from items on parallel rights. The smaller differential is expected because both media and personal expression encompass a wide variety of activities, and when people are asked about (nearly) identical slices of those activities, the gap that normally results from disparate media and personal rights items should narrow. That personal rights should receive more support than media rights is a reflection of their personal relevance.

Origin of the parallel scales

Two expressive rights scales, which are composed of 13 items each, have been written to be as parallel as possible in order to directly compare support for media and personal expressive rights. Personal expressive rights are defined as those forms of expression that an individual or group of individuals are legally allowed to perform in public. Media rights are conceived of as expression allowed the press or entertainment media. These types of rights may be closely related in people's minds, but previous research has indicated that there are differences in mean levels of support for the two, with personal rights generally more supported than media rights. Thus, the parallel scales are intended to examine the relationship more closely than previous surveys have been able to, because the parallel items should remove error caused by questions about different kinds of expressive activities.

Some items in the scale are derived from Robert Wyatt's (1991) freedom of expression survey; others have been added to reflect concerns regarding expressive rights that have been addressed recently by the courts and public opinion. For example, the topic of political correctness is included in three items (on each scale) -- the right to offend people of different races, religions and sexes. Protesting, a hot topic in the last few years due to the Persian Gulf War, flag-burning and the continuing battle over abortion rights, is also included. Although these activities are generally done by individuals, the media items are phrased as "the right to editorialize" about such expression. The two expressive rights scales are attached as Appendix A.

The Support for Personal Rights Scale (SPRS) was first written as a 12-item scale. Testing among a relatively homogeneous sample produced a coefficient *alpha* of .86 for the original scale. Estimates of divergent construct validity were provided by correlating the SPRS with the Need for Cognition Scale (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and with the Right-wing Authoritarianism Scale (Altemeyer, 1981), which should be negatively related to support for expressive rights because individuals high in right-wing authoritarianism are resistant to change, nontraditional or threatening ideas. As expected, the SPRS was negatively correlated with the right-wing authoritarianism scale (r= -.46). The relationship was significant at the p<.05 level. The correlation between the NFC and SPRS scales was positive and low (r= .22). While this value indicates a slight relationship between SPRS and NFC, it is not high enough to suggest convergent validity, nor is it quite low enough for discriminant validity.

When the thirteen-item scales were developed, seventy-six subjects enrolled in junior-level communications classes at a southeastern university participated in an early pretest for reliability. Even with this relatively homogeneous sample of communications majors who should be sensitized to First Amendment issues, the scales met minimum standards for reliability. For the media rights scale (SMRS), the coefficient *alpha* was .75, and the coefficient *alpha* for SPRS was .70. The two scales were correlated at .68 ($p < .01$).

Validation with established scales

In order to validate the SMRS and the SPRS, two established scales were offered to a group of subjects along with the newly developed scales. One was the twelve-item social criticism scale (Jessor & Jessor, 1977). The social criticism construct is defined as the "degree of acceptance or rejection of the values, norms, and practices of the society" (Shaver, Robinson, & Wrightsman, 1991, p.355). It has been found to be positively related to problem behavior and, thus unconventionality. When tested with a longitudinal college sample, the social criticism scale produced a Cronbach's alpha of .85. The scale includes items that deal with economic opportunity, governmental activities and performance, education and the environment.

Because people who tend to be highly critical of the society in which they live should also be especially interested in obtaining more information about that society, social criticism and the two expressive rights scales should be positively correlated. To be able to criticize society, one must also be able -- in most cases -- to access information that is both good and bad. Therefore, people who are high in social criticism should also be more likely to support expressive rights than those who are low. The notion that people who score high on the social criticism scale are also frequently involved in problem behavior (including, according to Jessor and Jessor, marijuana use), however, suggests that the positive correlation may be moderate at best. Because personal expressive rights, perhaps including behavior or expression that some may consider problematic, are more personally relevant than media rights, the correlation between SPRS and social criticism should be slightly higher than between SMRS and social criticism.

The second established scale was the independence portion of Wrightsman's philosphies of human nature scale (1974). The fourteen independence items produced a corrected split-half reliability of .68, with a test-retest reliability of .75 after three months (Shaver, Robinson, & Wrightsman, 1991). Independence was highly correlated with the trustworthiness (r= .64) and altruism (r= .61) portions of the philosophies of human nature scale; it was slightly negatively correlated with complexity (r= -.16). Wrightsman conceptualizes independence as the extent to which people can maintain their convictions in the face of pressures to conform.

Independence should be divergent from the expressive rights scales because no research to date has suggested a link between the trait and support for free expression. That independence is negatively related to complexity, and support for personal expressive rights was found in a pretest to be positively related to need for cognition -- a trait that entails some cognitive complexity -- further suggests that the independence construct is unrelated to support for expressive rights.

Method

The four scales -- SPRS, SMRS, social criticism and independence -- were presented to 231 juniors and seniors enrolled in marketing courses at a large southeastern university. To reduce obtrusiveness of the expressive rights measures, items from the two scales were mixed together in a random order. Seven-point Likert-type scales were used to gather responses for each item. The sample included majors from several colleges (business, arts and sciences, communications, engineering). Subjects were told they were participating in a survey of their attitudes toward society. They were asked to complete the four scales, along with recording their sex and political orientation. As noted above, sex and political orientation have been found to predict levels of support for expressive rights, with men typically being more likely to support rights than women and people who identify themselves as liberal more likely to support rights than those on the right.

The sample consisted of 112 women and 121 men. In terms of political orientation, 23.7 percent identified themselves as liberal or far left, 34.6 percent identified themselves as moderate and 32.5 percent said they were conservative or on the far right. The remaining 9.2 percent did not know their political orientation.

The scales were structured with seven-point, Likert-type response sets, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." They were administered as pencil-and-paper exercises. Respondents were instructed to choose the response that best describes how they feel about each item, and they were assured that there are no right or wrong answers.

When the data were coded and entered into an SPSS file, each scale was analyzed for reliability. Minimum reliability is .70 in order for a scale to be internally consistent, such that each item is contributing toward the assessment of the construct in question (Nunnally, 1967). The coefficient *alpha* for the SPRS scale was .83, and the coefficient *alpha* for SMRS was .82. These figures indicate that the scales are internally consistent. For the social criticism scale, coefficient *alpha* was a low .68. This may reflect in part the moderate to conservative nature of the sample. The coefficient *alpha* for the independence scale was .79.

Correlations were obtained to gauge the relationships between each pair of scales in the form of a multitrait correlation matrix. To further validate the expressive rights scales, t-tests were run to determine whether men and women differentiated in their levels of support for the two kinds of rights. An analysis of variance was also used to look for differences in levels of support by political orientation. Finally, for both the SPRS and the SMRS, item-total and interitem correlations were obtained to further document the reliability of the scales; to test for relationships between the two scales, items from each scale were correlated with the sum of the items from the other scale.

Results

A multitrait correlation matrix was constructed to determine whether the expressive rights scales were indeed divergent from the social criticism and independence scales (see Table 1). As predicted, both expressive rights scales were positively correlated with social criticism, but only lowly (r_{SPRS}= .14; r_{SMRS}= .11). This indicates that the two traits are divergent. The personal rights scale was significantly correlated with the social criticism scale at the $p < .05$ level, suggesting that perhaps those who are interested in protecting their personal expressive rights may want to do so in part to voice social criticism. The independence trait is even more divergent from the SPRS and SMRS, with virtually no correlation (r_{SPRS}= .05; r_{SMRS}= .04).

The two expressive rights scales are, as might be expected, highly correlated (r= .76; $p < .01$). People who are willing to support one form of rights are fairly willing to support the other. The difference between the two scales lies in the mean levels of support. The SPRS had a mean level of support of 61.6 (standard deviation = 12.2), while the mean support for SMRS was 51.1 with a standard deviation of 12.6. This disparity suggests that while the constructs are closely related, they are not entirely convergent.

Previous research mentioned above indicates that men and women differ in support for expressive rights, and the greatest disparity lies in support for media rights (Miller, Andsager, & Wyatt, 1992). T-tests to further validate the expressive rights scales support this finding. For the SPRS, women's mean level of support was 58.9 and men's was 64.1. The difference was significant at the $p < .001$ level (t_{229}= -3.33). Mean support for SMRS was lower for both groups, with women's mean at 47.9 and men's mean 54.1 (t_{231}= -3.87; $p < .0001$). These mean levels of support are consistent with previous research that has attempted to examine differences between men and women's support for expressive rights, further suggesting that the scales are measuring different constructs.

An ANOVA to further validate the findings relative to political orientation found a significant difference among the political orientation groups in terms of their support for expressive rights. For personal rights, subjects who identified themselves as liberal (mean support = 66.2) were significantly more supportive than those who identified themselves as conservative (mean support = 58.9; $F_{5, 227}$= 2.58, $p < .05$). Moderates fell in the middle with a mean of 61.6. The same trends appeared for the SMRS scale ($F_{5, 227}$= 2.95; $p < .05$). Liberals had a mean of 56.6; moderates, 50.1; and conservatives had a mean level of support of 49.0. Again, these differences in means lend support to the differences between the SPRS and SMRS constructs.

SPRS

For both expressive rights scales, corrected item-total correlations and inter-item correlations were obtained to further assess the psychometric qualities of the scales. Item-total correlations evaluate individual items on the basis of total variance, and those with high correlations will increase the scale's variance, adding to the total reliability (Nunnally, 1967). To be valuable, each item should have an item-total correlation of at least .20; the scale should have an average item-total correlation of .40. Inter-item correlations should be positive and at least moderate.

The average item-total correlation for the SPRS was .47, indicating that the items each contribute in a positive way to the scale's variance. Individual item-total correlations, displayed in Table 2, range from .32 for the right to offend people of another race or ethnic group to .57 for the right to protest military actions by the government. Means were obtained for each item; the highest mean (6.0) occurred for the right to criticize the president, and the item receiving the least support (mean= 3.1) was the right to burn the flag to protest governmental actions.

Inter-item correlations were calculated. (See Table 3.) All were positive, ranging from .01 (offending another race and criticizing the president) to .72 (viewing pictures of graphic sex acts and viewing material that contains nudity). Nearly all correlations were significant. This finding further suggests that all thirteen items should be retained. When the SPRS items were correlated with the sum of media rights items, all were positively related to the SMRS items, although none of the correlations was high. This indicates that the personal expressive rights and media rights are not the same construct.

Taken together, the psychometric tests performed on the SPRS indicate that it is a reliable scale that appears to measure the construct of support for personal expressive rights.

SMRS

Corrected item-total correlations for the media rights scale produced an average of .45, which also surpasses the minimum requirement and suggests that all items are contributing to the scale's reliability. Item-total correlations for the SMRS have a broader range than those of the SPRS: the lowest is .28 for discussing the sex lives of public figures, and the highest is .58 for editorializing in favor of burning the flag. Means for the media-rights items are slightly lower than for their parallel SPRS items. The highest level of support for media rights occurred for the right to criticize the president (5.5), the same item that received the most support in terms of personal rights. For media rights, the least-supported item was that of the media reporting false information they believe to be true (a situation dealing with libel), which had a mean of 2.4. Item-total correlations, means and standard deviations for the SMRS are displayed in Table 4.

Inter-item correlations for SMRS are all positive, ranging from .02 to .63. (See Table 5.) The lowest correlation appeared between discussing the sexual habits of public figures and editorializing for or against abortion rights; the highest -- not surprisingly -- occurred between offending people of other religions and offending people of other races or ethnic origins. Again, the majority of the inter-item correlations were significant. When SMRS items were correlated with the sum of items from the personal rights scale, each correlation was positive, but only one was high -- that of the media's right to offend people of other religions (r=.60).

These properties suggest that the SMRS is also a reliable scale; the differing levels of support and patterns of support indicate that the SMRS is not the same construct as support for personal rights, although they are highly correlated.

Discussion and conclusion

The parallel scales developed in this study are designed to evaluate the public's level of support for media rights and personal expressive rights. To date, public support for the two kinds of rights has never been directly compared, although the public itself, scholars and journalists seem to make assumptions about the variation in support based on surveys that address a number of different and incomparable forms of expression. Use of parallel scales can help public opinion and freedom of expression scholars to better assess where -- or if -- disparities in public support for the media or personal rights lie. Such information would be useful for educators, especially journalism educators, who might be able to better pinpoint how to increase support for expressive rights among their students. Public information campaigns designed to increase (or decrease) public support for certain kinds of expression would also find the parallel scales useful.

While the SPRS and SMRS have been found to be reliable and valid in this study, they need to be tested among a larger, more heterogeneous sample. The sample used in this study was fairly broad in terms of interests and political orientation, but limited by education, age and geography. However, because the scales had better-than-adequate reliabilities even in such a homogeneous sample, they should remain reliable among better samples. The question that needs to be addressed is validity. A known-groups validity test, perhaps among members of the American Civil Liberties Union and the American Family Association (which intends to promote further media regulation, especially for entertainment television and movies), would provide further evidence of construct validity. Finally, a sample broader in terms of geography should also be studied because certain kinds of expression may be perceived differently in various areas depending on what is topical or relevant.

More items on each scale would only add to the reliability and variance accounted for, but the scales currently meet psychometric requirements. Whether the items included in these parallel scales will stand the test of time -- and for how long -- is unknown. Historically, survey items on public support for free expression have fluctuated quite a bit to measure reaction to whatever topic is currently in the spotlight. The items on the SPRS and SMRS are for the most part, however, fairly general. Over time, some may have to be replaced or modified, but that is typical for most scales that focus on social attitudes. The main bodies of the scales should remain viable for the foreseeable future because they are broad enough to encompass a number of concerns that have been historically debated.

Although more study needs to be conducted on the parallel scales presented here, the evidence to date suggests that these scales are reliable and divergent from other, somewhat related constructs. The assessment of public support for personal expressive rights and media rights to the same kinds of expression can be done quickly and easily using the SPRS and SMRS.

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Table 1. Multitrait correlation matrix of the four scales.

	SPRS	SMRS	Independence	Social criticism
SPRS	1.0			
SMRS	.76**	1.0		
Independence	.05	.04	1.0	
Social criticism	.14*	.11	-.23**	1.0

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

Table 2. Corrected item-total correlations, means and standard deviations for SPRS items.

	item-total correlation	mean*	standard deviation
Offend race	.32	4.2	1.9
Foreign govt.	.53	5.2	1.4
Criticize president	.41	6.0	1.2
Protest military	.57	5.2	1.4
Protest abortion rts.	.33	5.4	1.5
Offend sex	.58	4.2	1.8
Burn flag	.53	3.1	2.1
Sex habits of public	.45	4.9	1.6
Offend religion	.56	4.7	1.6
View graphic sex acts	.47	4.9	1.7
False information	.40	4.1	1.7
Homosexuality	.56	4.6	1.7
View nude photos	.39	5.1	1.6

*On a 7-point Likert-scale, with 7 as strongly agree (or support this right) and 1 as strongly disagree (do not support this right).

Table 3. Inter-item correlations for the SPRS.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Offend race	1.0												
2. Foreign govt.	.20[a]	1.0											
3. Crit. president	.01	.47[a]	1.0										
4. Crit. military	.10	.54[a]	.43[a]	1.0									
5. Protest abortion	.15[b]	.24[a]	.14[b]	.34[a]	1.0								
6. Offend sex	.44[a]	.35[a]	.24[a]	.32[a]	.22[a]	1.0							
7. Burn flag	.22[a]	.34[a]	.28[a]	.47[a]	.27[a]	.25[a]	1.0						
8. Sex -- public fig.	.13	.25[a]	.40[a]	.25[a]	.04	.36[a]	.23[a]	1.0					
9. Offend religion	.45[a]	.39[a]	.17[a]	.33[a]	.32[a]	.66[a]	.26[a]	.31[a]	1.0				
10. View sex acts	.07	.26[a]	.21[a]	.29[a]	.11	.27[a]	.31[a]	.27[a]	.17[b]	1.0			
11. False inform.	.11	.16[b]	.14[b]	.29[a]	.17[a]	.30[a]	.26[a]	.33[a]	.25[a]	.24[a]	1.0		
12. Homosexual.	.23[a]	.30[a]	.21[a]	.37[a]	.26[a]	.33[a]	.39[a]	.31[a]	.39[a]	.36[a]	.36[a]	1.0	
13. View nude ph.	.13[b]	.21[a]	.21[a]	.21[a]	.03	.18[a]	.33[a]	.23[a]	.05	.72[a]	.15[b]	.26[a]	1.0

[a] Correlations are significant at $p < .01$.

[b] Correlations are significant at $p < .05$.

Table 4. Corrected item-total correlations, means and standard deviations for SMRS items.

	item-total correlation	mean*	standard deviation
Offend race	.51	3.9	1.7
Foreign govt.	.55	4.4	1.7
Criticize president	.34	5.5	1.5
Protest military	.54	4.7	1.6
Protest abortion rts.	.43	4.4	1.8
Offend sex	.43	3.6	1.8
Burn flag	.58	3.2	2.0
Sex habits of public	.28	4.1	1.6
Offend religion	.55	4.1	1.7
View graphic sex acts	.46	2.9	1.8
False information	.33	2.4	1.5
Homosexuality	.44	3.9	1.7
View nude photos	.44	4.0	1.8

*On a 7-point Likert-scale, with 7 as strongly agree (or support this right) and 1 as strongly disagree (do not support this right).

Table 5. Inter-item correlations for the SMRS.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Offend race	1.0												
2. Foreign govt.	.29[a]	1.0											
3. Crit. president	.19[a]	.33[a]	1.0										
4. Crit. military	.31[a]	.61[a]	.35[a]	1.0									
5. Protest abortion	.19[a]	.35[a]	.14[b]	.43[a]	1.0								
6. Offend sex	.55[a]	.26[a]	.05	.19[a]	.19[a]	1.0							
7. Burn flag	.21[a]	.48[a]	.25[a]	.41[a]	.41[a]	.25[a]	1.0						
8. Sex -- public fig.	.22[a]	.18[a]	.21[a]	.13[b]	.02	.21[a]	.15[b]	1.0					
9. Offend religion	.63[a]	.31[a]	.24[a]	.27[a]	.20[a]	.57[a]	.32[a]	.19[a]	1.0				
10. View sex acts	.29[a]	.22[a]	.18[a]	.19[a]	.15b	.28[a]	.31[a]	.19[a]	.22[a]	1.0			
11. False inform.	.21[a]	.12	.03	.17[a]	.25[a]	.16[b]	.28[a]	.09	.25[a]	.25[a]	1.0		
12. Homosexual.	.26[a]	.29[a]	.09	.30[a]	.36[a]	.17[a]	.36[a]	.04	.31[a]	.33[a]	.15[b]	1.0	
13. View nude ph.	.09	.23[a]	.31[a]	.21[a]	.23[a]	.05	.38[a]	.30[a]	.15[b]	.48[a]	.24[a]	.29[a]	1.0

[a] Correlations are significant at $p < .01$.
[b] Correlations are significant at $p < .05$.

APPENDIX 1

Support for Personal Rights Scale

disagree agree

1. An individual's right to protest against abortion should be protected by law.

2. An individual should have the right to publicly say that a foreign government is better than the United States government.

3. An individual's right to make statements that would offend people from a different racial or ethnic group should be protected by law.

4. *There should be a law against allowing an individual the right to buy or view material that features nude pictures.

5. By law, an individual should have the right to burn the American flag to protest the actions of the government.

6. An individual's right should be protected by law when he or she makes statements that offend people of different religious groups.

7. *There should be a law preventing an individual from criticizing the president.

8. An individual's rights under the law should be protected when he or she makes statements in public that advocate homosexuality.

9. An individual should have the right by law to make statements that would offend people of a certain gender.

10. By law, an individual should have the right to buy or view material that includes pictures of sexual acts between consenting adults.

11. *There should be a law preventing an individual from discussing the sexual habits of public figures.

12. The law should allow an individual the right to protest against military actions by the government.

13. An individual should have the right to discuss false information about other people when he or she believes it is true.

*Indicates items that should be reverse-coded.

Support for Media Rights Scale

disagree agree

1. Under the law, the media should have the right to print or broadcast statements that would offend people of a certain gender.

2. By law, the media should have the right to print or broadcast material that includes pictures of sexual acts between consenting adults.

3. The media should have the right to print or broadcast false information when they believe it is true.

4. By law, the media should have the right to editorialize in favor of burning the American flag to protest the actions of the government.

5. The media's right should be protected when they publish or broadcast statements that offend people of various religious groups.

6. *There should be a law preventing the media from discussing the sexual habits of public figures.

7. By law, the media should have the right to editorialize for or against abortion.

8. The law should protect the media's rights when they print or broadcast public statements that advocate homosexuality.

9. *There should be a law preventing the media from criticizing the president.

10. By law, an individual should have the right to buy or view material that includes pictures of sexual acts between consenting adults.

11. An individual should have the right to discuss false information about other people when he or she believes it is true.

12. An individual's rights under the law should be protected when he or she makes statements in public that advocate homosexuality.

13. *There should be a law against allowing an individual the right to buy or view material that features nude pictures.

*Indicates items that should be reverse-coded.

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A Multiattribute Attitude Model as a Descriptive and Diagnostic Tool for Media Managers

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A Multiattribute Utility Model as a Descriptive and Diagnostic Tool for Media Managers

Increased competition among the media for local advertising dollars means traditional mass media like newspaper, television, and radio may need to find better ways to compete for advertising budgets in order to maintain their economic support structure. This study attempts to analyze retail advertisers' media decision mechanism by building a descriptive multi-attribute evaluation model (MAU). We conduct a questionnaire sampling survey of 163 retailers in two median size southeastern cities. Factor analysis is performed to analyze the data and help build the model. The model is tested against the data. First, a Pearson correlation coefficient of .73 shows the predictive model explained 53 percent of the variance in global evaluation ratings. Second, a Spearman rank order correlation coefficient of model and global measures is .90. Finally, a test procedure of our own called "pair-wise choice" further tests the validity of the MAU model. Consistency of pair-wise comparisons between respondents' global and model ratings was at 89 percent. We suggest the model can be a useful descriptive and diagnostic tool for measuring attitudes toward local media.

In designing a successful marketing strategy, it is crucial that product managers understand how consumers choose between products and brands. While many researchers have studied such decision mechanisms (e.g., James et al., 1976; Fishbein, 1963; Kassarjian and Robertson, 1981), little research has been done to help media managers understand the decision process of their consumers -- advertisers.

Local retail advertising is a vital part of the media economy. Close to half of all U.S. advertising dollars are spent by local advertisers on local media (Coen, 1991). But competition among the media for local advertising budgets has intensified in recent years. Integrated marketing strategies and new media technologies offer local advertisers more varied media choices (e.g., Rapp and Collins, 1990). A slowing economy is causing advertisers to reduce overall advertising budget amounts. Traditional mass media like newspaper, television, and radio may need to find better ways to compete for advertising budgets in order to maintain their economic support structure (e.g., Rosenstiel, 1990; Terrell, 1990).

This study attempts to analyze retail advertisers' media decision mechanism by building a descriptive multiattribute attitude model (MAU). We first conduct a questionnaire sampling survey of 163 retailers in two median size southeastern cities. Factor analysis is performed to analyze the data and help build the model. The model is then tested against the data by conventional Pearson correlation and rank order correlation. We also develop a test procedure of our own called "pair-wise choice" to further test the validity of the MAU model in describing retailers' media decision-making process.

Our main objective, of course, is not merely building a theoretical model. Once we have some evidence affirming the validity of the model as a descriptive tool, we will proceed to discuss how the model can be used by media managers as a diagnostic tool in designing good marketing strategies.

Advertisers' Purchasing Behavior

Most studies of advertisers' purchasing behavior are prescriptive in nature -- models and theories that suggest to advertisers how they should act in order to achieve their objectives most effectively (e.g., Rust, 1986). Those models primarily benefit national advertisers but are often inappropriate or inefficient on a retail level (Teel and Beardon, 1980). National advertising objectives are typically long-term development of brand awareness, preference, and image, while retail campaigns frequently have short-term objectives related to generating store traffic, increasing inventory turnover, and promoting specific items (Teel and Beardon, 1980).

A smaller body of literature is more descriptive -- investigating advertisers' decision making regarding advertising budgets and media buy choices (e.g., Aaker and Carman, 1982; Kreshel et al, 1985; Lancaster et al, 1986; Otnes and Faber, 1989). Aaker and Carman (1982), for example, report that a large number of advertisers overadvertised. Picard (1989) argues that demand for advertising time and space doesn't necessarily increase with longer programming time or greater content diversity. Otnes and Faber (1989) drew a sample of 109 retailers in banking, grocery, automobile, furniture and restaurant businesses in two local markets in the Southwest. They found that those advertisers rated newspapers as most likely to be used by consumers for information; direct mail and newspapers were rated significantly higher than other media on allowing consumers more time to remember the message; television was reported as the most entertaining medium but the most difficult to produce and expensive to buy.

Those descriptive studies, however, often focus on the results rather than the mechanisms of the decision making process. The studies emphasize what advertisers' decisions are. Few studies report efforts to build and test theoretical models that describe and explain how and why advertisers reached those decisions. Further, there is a lack of any kind of descriptive research on local retail advertisers who operate under very different constrains from those faced by national advertisers (Otnes and Faber, 1989, p. 57).

Multiattribute Model

Multiattribute models have many variations, and different researchers apply different labels such as multiattribute attitude models, multiattribute utility models (MAU), multiattribute utility technology (MAUT), multiattribute evaluation models, and additive models (e.g. Bass and Talaryzyk, 1972; Hughes, 1971; James, Durand, and Dreves, 1976; Edwards and Newman, 1982). The models all share the same basic form:

$$A/U = \sum_{i=1}^{n} Bi\ Wi$$

where:

A/U = overall attitude toward a particular object or overall utility of the object
Bi = the evaluative aspect or performance or belief toward attribute i for a particular object
Wi = the weight or importance of attribute i
n = the number of attributes important in the selection of a media.

Studies on this basic model or its close variations form two distinctive and generally independent traditions. One is prescriptive, formed by some psychologists, industrial engineers, and decision consultants who develop MAUT models that they believe other people *should* follow to make better decisions (Edwards and Newman, 1982; Von Winterfelt and Edwards, 1986). Another tradition is descriptive, formed by consumer behavior theorists and attitude researchers who use similar models to describe, explain, and predict how people actually make decisions (Rosenburg, 1956; Fishbein, 1963).

The basic assumptions of the two traditions appear contradictory. Descriptive theorists explicitly assume that consumers actually do behave the way the MAU model predicts. By taking on the mission of teaching others to use the MAU model, prescriptive researchers imply that people do not normally follow the model.

The contradiction could be reconciled if we reject the implicit all-or-none assumption. Descriptively, it is likely that some people under some conditions do follow the MAU model, while others under other conditions don't. Prescriptively, it might be beneficial to think that some people under some conditions should follow MAU model, while others under other conditions should not.

When making the most important decisions in their life (high involvement) people should follow those decision models that promise maximum utility (Raiffa, 1968). But if a decision has trivial consequences (low involvement) it's better to follow so called "heuristic cues" that require much less time and energy (Lopes, 1991). Therefore, ordinary consumers choosing between brands of chewing gum at a supermarket's cash register are not advised to follow the MAU model, while first-time house buyers are.

Local retail advertisers choosing between media or vehicles are highly motivated to make good decisions. They are paid to make the decisions. Their company's success or survival may be dependent on their making good decisions most of the time when allocating their limited advertising budget.

In this situation, a descriptive study may make prescriptive contributions regardless of the findings. If the study finds that advertisers as a group actually do _not_ follow the MAU model, it suggests to advertisers that they may significantly improve their decision making by learning the MAU technology. If the finding is that the advertisers actually _do_ follow the MAU model, it suggests to local media managers that they may significantly improve their marketing strategy by using the MAU model to understand and predict their clients' purchasing behavior.

There is little prior research linking the MAU model and local advertisers. In addition to the incentives for local advertisers to act rationally, there are other reasons for us to expect the MAU model to succeed in describing local advertisers' attitudes. Measurement of advertising effectiveness is often a subjective analysis at the local level. The advertiser evaluates media effectiveness based on his or her own expectations and analysis of results. The multi-attribute model's ability to account for expectations as well as perceptions makes it a particularly appropriate tool for measuring local advertisers' evaluations of media.

Therefore, we will define our MAU model as the following:

$$Am = \sum_{i=1}^{n} Bi\ Wi$$

where:

Am = attitude toward a particular medium
Bi = the evaluative aspect or performance or belief toward attribute i for a particular medium
Wi = the weight or importance of attribute i
n = the number of attributes important in the selection of media.

A major task of this study is to test the accuracy of this model in describing local advertisers' decision mechanism. We will first use a mail questionnaire to measure AM, Bi, and Wi. Based on the data, we will use three different methods to verify the model by testing the correlation between the two different measures of overall attitudes toward the media (AM) -- 1) the AM measured by directly asking the respondents, and 2) the AM predicted by our MAU model on the basis of Bi and Wi. Those three methods are Pearson correlation, Spearman rank order correlation, and our own method called "pair-wise choice" test.

Methods

This study tests the predictive ability of the multi-attribute attitude model with respect to attitude toward five media in two cities. We drew a stratified (by category) systematic random sample from a sampling frame of local businesses in two median-size southeastern cities in three categories: banks (financial institutions); automobile dealers (new franchise dealers); and retail durables (furniture and clothing). The sampling frame was each city's 1990-1991 telephone books' yellow pages. Local retail businesses are listed in the yellow pages since they rely heavily on telephone communications and rarely, if ever, list only in the white pages or have unpublished numbers.

Because advertising expenditures are a crucial and costly component of success, local retailers often monitor decisions closely or handle them personally. They often have limited time to spend on advertising-related tasks due to other management responsibilities such as accounting, sales management, finance, purchasing, inventory, personnel management, and customer services. To increase accuracy and response rates, we telephoned each business in the sample (often more than once) in advance to solicit: 1) the name of the advertising manager (the person making advertising decisions for the business); 2) a verbal agreement from the advertising manager to complete the questionnaire; and 3) the complete mailing address.

Pre-notification by letter was shown to significantly increase response rate in a meta-analysis of individual survey research response rates dating back to 1960 (Fox, Crask, and Kim, 1988). Hence, for this study, pre-notification by telephone may have had similar positive effects by decreasing the chances that the survey would be inadvertently discarded, by alerting the recipient to its arrival, and by establishing legitimacy and a form of trust. In addition, by obtaining verbal agreement from each respondent to return the completed questionnaire, we hoped that a sense of moral obligation might compel them to follow through on their verbal agreement.

The initial sample totaled 265. The final sample consisted of 163 usable questionnaires, representing a 64 percent response rate.

The Instrument. The questionnaire consisted of several parts. The first part measured the importance of six media attributes or characteristics which had been identified as most salient from the literature and from informal interviews with local advertisers. Results represent respondents' expectations (Wi) of each media on the designated attributes of features.

The second part asked the respondents to evaluate on a zero-to-ten scale each of five media on each of the six attributes. Results represent respondents' performance evaluations (Bi) of each medium on each attribute or feature.

Respondents were then asked to rate on a zero-to-ten scale their overall evaluation of each medium. This measure is a global or unidimensional measure of attitude toward the individual media (AM). Finally, measures of demographic, company, and market characteristics were collected.

The six attributes represented the dimensions 'value', 'quality', and 'service'.[1] The two 'value' questions asked whether media should generate store traffic and be cost efficient at reaching prospective customers. The two 'quality' questions asked whether media should present an appropriate product image and convey important message points/be informative. Informativeness is related to the respondent's advertising and communication objectives and to the amount of information and message points they perceive as important to convey in an advertisement (Reid and King, 1986).

The two 'service' questions asked whether employees of a media firm should keep their promises when they agree to do something by a certain time and should get adequate support from the management to do their jobs well (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1988). The sale of the advertisement is just the beginning of a complex process involving copy, production, traffic, engineering, and accounting departments. When errors occur along this process, the advertiser often expects the media firm to support or 'back up' the initial sales agreement.

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[1] In a pre-test of the questionnaire, 19 evaluation variables were shown to group together on the dimensions 'value', 'channel characteristics or quality', and 'service' in factor analysis using principal components with varimax rotation.

Results

Just over half of the sample (56.5%) were retail durables businesses (furniture and clothing stores). About one fourth of the sample (26.1%) were automobile dealers, and the balance (17.4%) were banks (n=163). The advertising decision-maker (respondent) was the owner 44 percent of the time and an employee manager 57.8 percent of the time. A fairly even distribution of large, mid-size, and small local retail businesses were represented in the final sample. Approximately half (52.2%) of respondents reported monthly budgets under $6,000. Mid-size businesses with budgets ranging from $6,000 to $18,000 made up about one-fourth of the sample (25.8%). Larger businesses with budgets over $18,000 made up the remaining 22 percent of the sample.

Factor Analysis. Table 1 presents the results of a factor analysis using principal components with varimax rotation. The six variables loaded along 2 broader dimensions: effectiveness (Factor 1); and service (Factor 2).

Table 1 about here

Table 1 shows that advertisers' perceptions of effectiveness (Factor 1) accounted for 43.7 percent of the variance and service (Factor 2) for 18 percent of the variance in media attitude scores. Effectiveness and service factors are used in the remaining analyses to compare global and model attitude ratings.

Correlation Comparison. For each of the five media (network/local television, newspaper, radio, cable television, and direct mail) on both attribute factors (effectiveness and service) a mean importance/performance measure is computed by multiplying the performance rating (Bi) by the importance rating (Wi) for that attribute factor. The sum of these importance/performance measures is the predicted measure of attitude based on the multi-attribute attitude model. Table 2 shows these results.

Table 2 about here

To test the measure of the predicted attitude score, each medium's model score was correlated with the global or overall evaluation score. The average Pearson correlation coefficient between the multi-attribute model's predicted scores and the unidimensional measure was .73 ($p<.001$). Thus, the predictive model explained 53 percent of the variance in global evaluation ratings. This is evidence the multi-attribute model is an effective predictor of media image.

Pair-wise Choice Comparison. A second test of the model's accuracy is a pair-wise choice comparison of global and model ratings. Five media equate to ten pair-wise comparisons for 163 cases, totalling 1,630 pair-wise comparisons. For each comparison, a 'hit' was noted when the model score was either greater than, less than, or equal to the global score. Otherwise, the comparison was declared a 'miss'. Of the pairwise comparisons, 89 percent were 'hits' and 11 percent were 'misses'. This, too, supports the model as a useful and accurate measure of media image.

Rank Order Comparison. Table 3 shows a ranking of media by the global and model measurements. Rankings are consistent as shown by the Spearman Rank correlation coefficient of .90, again supporting the use of the model.

Table 3 about here

Discussion and Conclusions

Media generally direct promotional efforts toward their viewing audience with the assumption that advertisers will follow. If perceptions and attitudes lead to behavior, it is crucial that a business in a free market economy understand its customers to achieve profit and growth goals. Financial support for U.S. media comes largely from the sale of advertising. Competition for advertising budgets has threatened the very survival of some media in the face of recession, new media choices, decreasing budgets, and fragmentation of audiences. Traditional mass media such as newspaper, television, and radio may need to find better ways to compete for advertising budgets.

A better understanding of local retail advertisers is a crucial component to maintaining their business in an increasingly competitive media market. Research about advertisers' media choices often relies on analyses of the media that advertisers buy, assuming that the apparent relative popularity of the media is implied by the amount of advertising dollars invested in each of them. Yet advertisers face many constraints and considerations when choosing advertising media. Retail advertisers must choose a media mix that will optimize advertising campaign objectives within limited advertising budgets. They must consider their product inventory and pricing strategies, as well as external factors such as prevailing seasons and economic conditions.

Local retail advertisers acquire direct experience with local media when they interact with media firm personnel during the buying, planning, and production processes, and as they evaluate outcomes relating to the advertisement and its effectiveness. They also experience the media in a non-professional or 'off the job' environment as a consumer of local media news, editorials, entertainment, and advertisements. Advertisements include their own, their competitors, and the self-promotional efforts of the media itself that might be directed to them in their role as audience member, retail advertiser, or both. They might also talk with others personally and professionally about their experiences with the media. The media's dual role of professional business instrument and non-professional or 'off the job' personal instrument makes attitude formation of local retail advertisers toward local media a complex process with many variables.

Research in attitudes toward media firms has to date relied on semantic differential scales to measure performance ratings of media on various attributes. In other words, advertisers have been asked to rate media on performance without indicating their expectations regarding that performance. If an advertiser expects a particular medium to build institutional image for his or her business, but is asked to rate the medium on more short-term goals such as whether it generates store traffic, results could be misleading.

Results of this study support the use of the multi-attribute model for measuring, describing, and predicting media image. Information provided by the model would expand media management application beyond traditional semantic differential scale measurement to a more specific analysis of advertisers' expectations as well as perceptions. Media management could use the information to assess the relative importance of each attribute for each advertiser and assess the relative performance of their own media firm on the attribute.

The additional information offered by the model would enable media management to address specific areas for improvement. For example, management could segment market groups (advertisers) by relative importance/performance ratings and develop marketing strategies targeted to change customers' evaluations on an attribute.

A suggestion for further research on the model is to regress performance ratings on global ratings and compare the resulting Beta weights with respondents' importance ratings. Developing this analysis strategy could lead to a survey instrument with the capability of determining importance factors without the cost of collecting the additional information.

In summary, more research is needed to define and examine local advertisers' expectations, perceptions, and attitudes toward their local media. Measuring the media image of local media firms using the proposed model may be worthwhile. A periodical survey of local retail advertisers using the MAU model could help establish a local media firm's competitive position in the community's media marketplace and guide self-promotional strategies. Media could establish a baseline image rating for tracking changes and trends over time.

The model could also help determine whether market segmentation strategies would be applicable to the media firm by analyzing the differences in attitudes held by different types of advertisers. The relative influence different advertisers place on value, channel quality, and service dimensions of media performance could be monitored to guide sales strategies.

Media may need to follow the lead of other industries currently attempting to strengthen their competitive positions by focussing on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Research to identify and explain factors that influence advertiser evaluations of the media could help achieve a better understanding of the decision-making process and of customer expectations regarding sales, production, and overall advertising objectives.

Retail store image studies have found that the more favorable the store image, the more likely are the consumers to shop and buy in a particular store (Doyle and Fenwick, 1974). By the same logic, it can be assumed that the more favorable the media image, the more likely businesses are to advertise with a particular medium. However, the complex mix of communication technologies, ideologies, and people involved in advertising business and creative exchanges suggests other possible components of media image that might relate to factors such as editorial differences or personality conflict. Further development of the multi-attribute attitude model as a descriptive and diagnostic tool could help identify a media firm's weak areas and those local advertisers who are less than confident with their local media choices.

APPENDIX

Table 1. Factor Analysis of Media Evaluation Criteria using Principal Components with Varimax Rotation.

	Factor 1 (Effectiveness)	Factor 2 (Service)
Generates store traffic	.81	
Cost effectivness	.80	
Presents image appropriate the advertiser business	.65	
Conveys message points/ informativeness	.73	
Reliability of representatives		.83
Media firm supports representatives		.80
Percent of variance explained	43.7	18.0

Table 2. Means of Evaluation/Importance Ratings

	Effectiveness*	Service**	Sum
TV	856	268	1128
Newspaper	1025	273	1297
Radio	759	254	1013
Cable TV	681	235	916
Direct Mail	916	260	1176

* Range 0-1600
** Range 0-400

Table 3. Ranking of Media According to Global Measure and Multi-Attribute Attitude Measure

Medium	Global Measure	Model Measure (Performance/Importance)
TV	2	3
Newspaper	1	1
Radio	4	4
Cable TV	5	5
Direct Mail	3	2

*The Spearman Rank Correlation coefficients was .90

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Questions vs. Answers in the 1992 Presidential Debates:
A Content Analysis of Interviewing Styles

by
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Abstract I

This content analysis compares the technical quality of questions asked by journalists and non-journalists of presidential candidates Bush, Clinton and Perot during the 1992 Presidential Debates. It also examines candidates' answers to see if technically better questions resulted in technically better answers, and explores who was most likely to have questions answered during the debates. The definition of "better" applied was developed and tested by researcher Ronald Ostman in his study of relatedness of questions and answers in President Kennedy's Press Conferences.

Abstract II

This content analysis compares the technical quality of questions asked by journalists and non-journalists of presidential candidates George Bush, Bill Clinton and Ross Perot during the 1992 Presidential Debates. It also examines candidates' answers to see if technically better questions resulted in technically better answers. Some of the more notable findings include that audience members were twice as likely to have their questions answered than print reporters, and that of the candidates, Bill Clinton provided direct answers to questions twice as often as Ross Perot.

The definition of "better" applied was developed and tested by researcher Ronald Ostman in his study of relatedness of questions and answers in President Kennedy's Press Conferences. Only those variables found to have significance in the Ostman study were applied in this one. A category called "frequency of subjects mentioned in questions and answers" also was included to gauge whether candidates and interviewers (journalists and non-journalists)had the same agenda during the debates. This study suggests that they did not.

Introduction

The 1992 Presidential Debates were the first to use a variety of interviewing formats to ask questions of the candidates. Questions posed to candidates during the three presidential debates[1] were generated by panels of journalists, moderators, and an audience of voters. Often while answering questions, even the candidates asked questions of each other.

Increasingly, questions of elected officials are not left to professionals. Soaring ratings for radio and television talk shows in the six months preceding the 1992 election[2] show a demand by candidates and voters alike for "unfiltered conversation and opinion." What is unknown is what effect the lack of a filter may have on the quality of questions and answers. The Presidential debates presented a unique opportunity to examine this phenomenon.

This study explores whether a particular method of asking questions during the debates was more effective in getting complete answers from the candidates. Through content analysis, the study also examines the relatedness of question and answer -- did the candidate answer the question, or did he avoid the question by changing the subject? It also analyzes these answers in terms of *who* asked the questions, comparing whether journalists or audience members were more likely to get the answers they sought from the candidates.

It is important to note that this twofold examination of the quality of questions and answers plus the content of questions and answers is not necessarily correlated. While a question may be technically good, it does not guarantee that the content presented in the question will be addressed in the answer. Similarly, a poorly constructed question may generate a good answer if correlation exists between the content of each.

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[1] The three Presidential Debates were held October 12, 15 and 19, 1992.

[2] Peter Viles, "Talk Radio Riding High," Broadcasting, June 15, 1992, p. 24.

This comparison of interviewing styles is important from the perspectives of both the audience and candidates. If one format (moderator, panel, questions from audience) provides viewers with more information than another, perhaps voters may want to reconsider use of the filter - the journalist - for interviewing candidates for the presidency. This study begins to explore what purpose that filter serves by comparing the quality of questions and answers of when it used to when it is not.

Review of Literature

Far more many "how-to" books address interviewing skills than research articles. A review of journalism research showed few mentions of how the nature of asking questions affects the quality of answers. Of existing research, most deals with just one side of the interviewing process.

For example, Leon and Allen analyzed the "readability" of answers given by presidential candidates in the 1988 Presidential Debates to more accurately state which candidate "won."[3] However, their study did not explore the questions which generated the answers, thereby not allow for comparisons of context and content within the question/answer process.

The only study specifically designed to look at both sides of the interviewing equation is by Ostman, Babcock and Fallert, [4] who examined whether "good" questions elicit "good" answers.

The authors compared reporters' questions to answers given by President John F. Kennedy in formal press conferences. In defining what constitutes a "good" question,

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[3] Mary-Ann Leon and T. Harell Allen, "Improving Political Campaign Reporting: The Use of Precision Journalism in the 1988 Presidential Debate," Mass Communication Review, 17:3 (1990), 14-22.

[4] Ronald E. Ostman, William A. Babcock and J. Cecilia Fallert, "Relation of Questions and Answers in Kennedy's Press Conferences," Journalism Quarterly, 58:4 (1981), 575-581.

Ostman et. al. purposively selected 16 criteria or "pointers" from three references commonly referred to by journalists, and used to train journalism students in interviewing skills.[5] Each pointer was made a question-answer (Q-A) category for content analysis purposes. In general, categories measure the specificity, detail, relevance and topic of questions asked and answers provided. As many of these Q-A categories are incorporated into the current study, they are listed in Appendix I, and defined in Measures.

The null hypotheses was rejected in 13 of Ostman's 16 Q-A categories, indicating a relationship between how the question was asked and answered. This indicates that comparisons between the nature of questions and answers are effective in analyzing content generated from a political forum. Only those categories shown to be significant in the Ostman study were incorporated in this study.

Research Questions

1. Did "professional" interviewers such as journalists ask "better" questions than non professional interviewers?
2. Did "professional" interviewers such as journalists get "better" answers than non professional interviewers?
3. Did print or broadcast reporters ask the best questions during the presidential debates?
4. Are presidential candidates more likely to answer or not answer questions posed by professional interviewers or non professional interviewers?
5. Which candidate provided the "best" answers?
6. Which candidate was most likely to answer questions as posed?

Methods

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[5] Interviewing sources used by the authors were: Maxwell McCombs, Donald Lewis Shaw and David Grey, Handbook of Reporting Methods (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976); Charles H.Backstrom and Gerald D. Hursh, Survey Research (Evanston, Ill.; Northwestern University Press, 1963); Eugene J. Webb and Jerry R. Salancik, "The Interview or The Only Wheel in Town," Journalism Monographs 2:11 (1966).

The unit of analysis for this study was each question-answer set. The context unit was each of the 90-minute debates in which all question-answer sets occurred. The purpose was to learn if “better” questions provide “better” answers. To study what types of interviewers ask "better" questions and get "better" answers, a determination of what is "better" must be made.

To ensure the greatest reliability in an area receiving little research to date, the current study defines "better" by applying many of the question/answer categories defined, developed and tested by Ostman et. al. to the debate context. These categories are best thought of as "tips" for asking and answering effective questions. The more categories the interviewer adheres to in asking the question, the better. "Better" answers are similarly defined. The more categories the respondent applies in his answer, the better. Consequently, the categories are written so “yes” answers are always “better” and “no” answers are always “worse.”

Some adaptations to Ostman's categories have been made to provide a more appropriate fit with the current study. For example, the debate study excludes two of three Ostman categories where no relationship was found (grammar, facts) and includes one category (loaded) where statistical significance was not met but the data was in the direction of the research hypothesis. It also consolidates several Ostman categories which did not appear to be mutually exclusive.

Besides the Ostman categories, this study looks at variables based on characteristics of who asks (moderator, panel member or audience member) and answers (Bush, Clinton, Perot) each question. It also incorporates descriptive variables such as the gender and affiliation (print or broadcast journalist, or audience member) of the interviewer.

To better understand the extent to which questions and answers relate, this study also includes a category concerning the dominant topic of each question asked and answered. As some question and answers have more than one topic, this category allowed more than one category to be recorded.

Reliability

After pretesting the instrument with the 1992 Vice Presidential debate, the determination was made to limit the "answer" portion of this study to the first answer given by a candidate. Although candidates had at least one turn answering each question, only the first respondent had two minutes to complete answers. Subsequent answers by candidates were restricted to one minute or less, making comparisons between the two types of answers unequitable(although there is no evidence supporting that a "better" answered is delivered in two minutes than one). At the very least, this limits the "time of answer" threat to validity, and the percentage of answers generated in response to another candidate's comments, rather than the interviewer's question.

Content of each presidential debate was analyzed using two coders. Content was obtained by taping the debates broadcast on Cable News Network. Intercoder-reliability was 88 percent and was established by having each coder cross code 25 percent (12 question-answer sets). Reliability between sub categories ranged from 63 percent to 100 percent (identity of interviewer, order of respondents, use of double meanings in questions and answers). [6] In order to obtain intercoder reliability of 88 percent, the Ostman category with the least amount of reliability (63 percent) was dropped from the study. This category was "Does the interviewer ask questions which elicit respondents self-perceptions?" The "answer" version of this category was "Does the respondent use self perceptions as part of his answer?" The low reliability scores for the "self-perception" category may be explained by its similarity to a broader category: "Does the interviewer ask questions which elicit opinions and attitudes of the respondent?"

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[6] Intra-coder reliability, expressed as Scott's Pi, was as follows: Avoid double meanings in questions =100; Be specific=88; Make all of none of the alterantives explicit in questions =83; Preface unfamiliar or technical subjects with explantions or illustrations=92; Ask questions in terms of respondent's immediate and recent experience=92; Elicit opinions and attitudes of respondent=88; Avoid loaded questions=71; Avoid embarrassing questions=79; Avoid multi-part questions=79; Topic of question=96; Avoid double meanings in answer =100; Be specific in answer=92; Make all of none of the alternatives explicit in answer =88; Preface unfamiliar or technical subjects in answer with explanations or illustrations=96; Cite immediate and recent experience in answer=83; Provide opinions and attitudes in answer=88; Avoid loaded answers=75; Answer embarrassing questions=79; Avoid multi-subject answers=88; Topic of answer=100; . These values reflect the recalculation of Scott's Phi after one category with low reliability was dropped from the study.

Measures

Justification for each of the question-answer categories included in this study is provided below. Recall that two categories were found to have no significance (facts, grammar) in the Ostman study and were subsequently dropped from this study.

In addition, two Ostman categories thought not to be mutually exclusive were collapsed into narrower categories. These were "avoid questions which contain emotionally-charged words" (combined with "avoid loaded questions); and "avoid leading questions" (combined with "make explicit all alternatives, or make none of them explicit"). Question-Answer categories "specify exactly the time," "specify exactly the place," and specify exactly the context" were combined into one category, "be specific."

The Ostman category of "Avoid long questions" was dropped because question and answer lengths were artificially limited by rules of each debate format. Similarly, categories calling for interviewers and respondents to "make all or none of the alternatives explicit" and "avoid multi-part questions or answers" were slightly adjusted to incorporate the time-sensitivity of a televised debate.[7]

The following categories were assigned a "yes" or "no" for each question and answer. The more "yes" categories coded, the better the question or answer, interviewer or respondent.

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[7] The Ostman study of Kennedy press conferences analyzed questions and answers for more than a 12 month period. There likely was more time during a press conference to "make all alternatives explicit," a luxury is impractical during a 90-minute debate. Also, as members of the media or audience had few opportunities to ask questions of the candidates, it is likely that they would want to fit more into each question, thereby asking the multi-part questions that "better" interviewers avoid. Similarly, candidates may feel that they need to convey a lot of information in a small amount of time, making multi-part answers more a necessity than error.

1. "Avoid double meanings" when asking or answering questions because of increased likelihood of confusion. Double meanings can be compared to "semantic noise" or "the cause wrong interpretation of messages."[8] As Ostman et. al. explain, the word "dope" can be interpreted as 1)illegal drugs, 2)information, 3) an uninformed or stupid person, 4)to plan a course of action, and 5) to figure something out which formerly was a mystery.

2 " Be specific" means to avoid generalizations when asking or answering questions. This category is designed to study whether specific questions are more likely to generate specific answers. For example, a specific question would not ask: "Do you support eliminating world hunger?" Rather, it would state: "Do you support United Nations relief efforts to Somalia?" Similarly, a specific answer would focus on the United Nation's relief efforts to Somalia, rather than famine in general. Also, specific questions and answers provide context by setting the issue in place and time.

3. "Making all or none of the alternatives explicit" helps control bias on the part of the interviewer. Because the debate format made it is impractical to "make all alternatives explicit," this category was modified to say: "Does the interviewer avoid providing potential answers as part of the question?" The corresponding "answer" category was "Does the respondent avoid mentioning the various positions that can be taken on an issue, rather than stating what position he takes?" Candidates responding with a "better" answer take one position per issue, rather than trying to appeal to all factions.

This category is important because if potential answers are offered as part of questions, respondents may select that answer because he/she perceives it is what the interviewer wants to hear. These questions are also called "leading questions" because suggest to the respondent a "socially acceptable" answer.

4. "Prefacing unfamiliar or technical subjects with explanations or illustrations" gives each respondent the same base of information from which to answer the question.

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[8] Colin Cherry, On Human Communication (New York: Science Editions, Inc., 1961), pp. 240.

Similarly, it helps ensure that answers are understood by the general population, not just experts. This category could be helpful particularly in improving the voters' comprehension of issues. "Better" questions and answers explain unfamiliar and technical subjects so everyone may understand the context of the discussion.

5. "Asking questions in terms of the respondent's own immediate and recent experience rather than generalities" encourages respondents to include timely developments in answers. For example, asking President George Bush to describe what effect his son's role in the Savings and Loan crisis had on his campaign is likely to yield a more tailored response than asking how he feels about banking. This differs from category two as it focuses on the *respondent* rather than the *topic* of the question.

6. "It often is helpful to ask questions which elicit opinions and attitudes of the respondent - what is thought of felt about a particular subject at a particular point in time." A good example would be questions that begin by stating: "What is your opinion on...?" or "How do you feel about...?" Likewise, "better" answers or those which include opinions on a particular subject. This differs from category five because it deals with *opinions and attitudes* of respondents, which may be less factual or verifiable than *experiences.*

7. "Avoid 'loaded' questions and answers." Loaded questions use words with emotional connotations and which state one premise and ignore others.[9] Loaded questions "set up" the respondents by favoring one type of response over another. Likewise, loaded answers may "set up" other candidates, thereby reflecting the question rather than answering it.

For example, a loaded question would state: "Mr. President, don't you think it is pathetic that no country has lifted a finger to help the people of Bosnia?" Conversely, a non-loaded question would ask: "Mr. President, how would you compare the United States' foreign assistance package to Bosnia to that of other nations?"

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[9] Ostman, op. cit., p. 576.

8. "Avoid embarrassing questions because they often lead to untrue answers." An embarrassing question makes a person ill at ease, self-conscious or uncomfortable. According to Ostman, a distinguishing characteristic of such questions is a personal reference to the respondent in a challenging or accusatory context. This normally refers to shame, violation of commonly accepted social norms or rules, or to behavior or attitudes normally considered personal or private. Answers to embarrassing questions often are hesitant, confused, disorganized, and reflect obstructed thoughts and logic.[10]

This category has been revised slightly to provide consistency within a coding format that assigns "yes" answers to "better" questions and answers. Therefore, the "answer" version of this category is stated: "Does the candidate avoid changing the subject when an embarrassing question is asked?" This assumes that a "better" answer would tackle an embarrassing question, perhaps hoping to set the record straight, rather than avoiding it and allowing misconceptions to remain.

9. "Avoid multi-part questions." These are questions which introduce *more than one subject*. A two or three-part question or answer on a single subject is not a multi-part question or answer. Rather, a multi-part question or answer combines subjects, such as health care and law enforcement, or the environment and child care. Stressing a single element in a question gives a respondent less leeway in answering the question, thereby making the answer more direct. An example of a multi-part question is: "Should the United States send troops to protect the Kurds in Northern Iraq and enforce United Nations relief efforts in Somalia?"

10. The final measure compared the topic (s) of each question to that of each answer. Each question had between one and five topics. Topics were listed by coders in the order which they were mentioned by either the interviewer or respondent. Topics included the following categories: 1)family values; 2)budget deficit; 3)taxes; 4) inflation; 5)unemployment; 6)welfare; 7)health insurance; 8)health care; 9)environment; 10)vice

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[10] Ibid., 577.

presidents; 11)U.S. military spending; 12)past military service of candidates; 13)North American Free Trade Agreement 14)education; 15) U.S. disasters; 16)campaign process; 17)special interest groups 18)foreign affairs; 19)abortion; 20)law enforcement; 21)Congress; 22)trustworthiness; 23) change; 24)banking; 25) women and minorities, and 26) business and consumer affairs. Definitions for topics are provided in Appendix II

Results

A total of 48 question-answer sets were recorded during the three Presidential debates; 17 in the first debate, 15 in the second and 16 in the third. The first debate used a moderator/panel format; the second used a moderator/audience format/ and the third debate was divided between a moderator and panel format.

It was expected that journalists would do a better job than non journalists in asking questions of the candidates. This result was anticipated because journalists generally have more training and experience in asking questions than non journalists. This expectation was supported by the data, just as it was in the Ostman study. Cramer's V, a measure of the relationships' strength, ranged from .11 (avoid providing potential answers in questions) to .49 (avoid double meanings).

Journalists did a "better" job of asking questions than non-journalists 77 percent of the time, or in seven of nine Ostman categories. The moderators of the debates asked the best questions, with an average score of 84 percent.[11] The average for panel members was 71 percent, while audience members averaged 62.4 percent.

[Insert Table One About Here]

Moderators were most likely to ask "better" questions, reporting 100 percent in the categories of "avoid double meanings," "cite recent experience," "avoid embarrassing questions," and "elicit opinions and attitudes," (panel and audience members also scored 100 percent in the latter category). In two categories, moderators asked worse questions than panel members but better questions than audience members, those being "is the question specific" and "avoid providing potential answers."

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[11] This average was taken by dividing the cumulative scores of criteria designed to measure "better" questions and dividing by nine, the number of categories.

Panel members asked the best questions in the categories of "avoid double meanings and "be specific." Of the three groups of interviewers, panel members were the most likely to ask "loaded" questions and questions phrased to embarrass the candidates.

Audience members appeared to have the most trouble in citing recent experience of candidates in questions, doing so in only 30 percent of the questions. They also asked questions combining a number of topics at least twice as often as their professional counterparts.

It is interesting to note that audience members scored better than journalists only in the categories of "avoid loaded questions" and "avoid embarrassing questions." Arguably, these are the hardest types of questions to ask, and therefore the audience's success in these areas may be more to fear of offending the candidates rather than a concern for asking good questions. Based on the data, journalists at the debate appear to have no such fear.

[Insert Table 2 About Here]

Print reporters were most likely to ask questions coded either as "loaded" or "embarrassing." It is interesting to note that while print and broadcast journalists were relatively similar in their tendency to ask "loaded" questions, print reporters were twice as likely to ask "embarrassing" questions.

Print reporters also were more likely to "avoid providing potential answers" as part of their questions, scoring significantly higher than either broadcast reporters or audience members. While they were slightly less "specific" than broadcast reporters, they were slightly more likely to "cite recent experience of the candidates" in their questions.

According to Ostman's study on Kennedy Press Conferences, "better" questions do yield "better" answers. A comparison of questions to answers in this study shows similar results.

[Insert Table 3 About Here]

As seen in Table 3, candidates generally gave “better” answers to “better” questions. For example, all respondents included opinions in answers to questions designed to elicit opinions.

Clinton’s answers were “better” than Bush’s or Perot’s in the majority of categories, including “avoid double meanings,” “be specific,” “provide direct answers,” “cite recent experience,” and “preface technical answers with illustrations or examples.” Bush was slightly more likely than Clinton to “avoid loaded answers,” although much more likely than Perot. Perot gave “best” answers exclusively in only one category, “citing recent experience” in answers.

The two categories where candidates gave significantly “worse” answers than questions were “avoid changing the subject when asked embarrassing questions,” and “avoid including more than one subject in an answer.”

Bush answered embarrassing questions in 15 percent of the cases, while Clinton answered only 6.7 percent of questions coded as “embarrassing.” Perot was not asked any embarrassing questions based on the Ostman definition. However, Perot was the most likely of the three candidates to use answers containing more than one subject, doing so in 71 percent of his answers. Bush gave discussed more than one subject in 63 percent of his answers, while Clinton did so in 46 percent of his answers.

It is important to note that some questions contained more than one subject, although this was half as likely as answers containing more than one subject. Of 48 total questions, 17 (35 percent) had at least two subjects. Conversely, 33 (69 percent) of 48 total answers had at least two subjects.

It could be argued that candidates discussing more than one subject were actually providing "better" answers to a multi-subject question, despite that these answers were not considered "better" by the Ostman model. Therefore, an additional variable was introduced to measure whether the question was answered at all, exclusively, or as part of a sequence of subjects. "Sequence of subjects" is defined as speaking to the subject of the question, but also including unrelated topics in the answer."

[Insert Table 4 About Here]

Clinton was twice a likely as Perot to answer to limit his answers to the topic of questions. Clinton answered just the question posed by interviewers 73 percent of the time, meaning he did not include subjects other than those presented in questions. Clinton provided answers including other subjects for 20 percent of the questions, and did not answer about 7 percent of the questions.

Perot was least likely to answer questions, changing the subject in 21.4 percent of the questions. Bush was just slightly behind Perot in this category, not answering 21.1 percent of questions. However, Bush was much more likely than Perot to provide direct answers to questions. Perot was most likely to answer questions as part of a sequence of subjects, doing so 43 percent of the time. Bush was least likely to use this method of answering questions.

Even though audience members did not ask better questions than journalists, they were almost twice as likely to have the content of their questions addressed directly by candidates.

[Insert Table 5 About Here]

Candidates gave direct answers to 85 percent of questions posed by audience members, compared to 50 percent posed by broadcast journalists and 46 percent posed by print journalists.

Print journalists were least likely to have their questions answered by candidates. While broadcast journalists had better luck in getting answers, one third of the answers to broadcast journalists' questions were provided in sequenced answers.

Finally, it is interesting to explore the correlation of subjects in questions to answers. In several cases, it seemed interviewers and respondents had different agendas.

[Insert Table 6 About Here]

Table 6 compares the frequency of subjects mentioned in debate questions and answers. Candidates discussed taxes almost twice as often in their answers as interviewers did in questions. Candidates also were much more willing than interviewers to talk about Congress, the campaign process, special interest groups, law enforcement and crime, and trustworthiness. Conversely, topics such as "change," vice presidents" and "abortion," all receiving tremendous news coverage during the primary race, were hardly mentioned by either side during the debates.

In general, interviewers appeared to want a more evenly distributed subject range than candidates. The most striking discrepancy was in the area of "education;" interviewers brought up "education" issues more than twice as often as candidates.

Discussion

This study seems to show that "better" questions do generate "better" answers. However, it is important to note that "better" question and answers were those fitting the Ostman definition of "better." When "better" is defined by whether the topic of the question matched that of the answer, a different pattern emerges. In those cases, non-professional interviewers appeared to be much more effective in getting straight answers to their questions.

It seems that a "technical" definition of better such as the Ostman model is insufficient to predict how often questions will be answered. While it is interesting that data support the concept of "technically better" questions invoking technically "better" answers, the bottom line is whether or not the question is answered. Future research might address why candidates preferred to answer voters questions more often than journalists'. One explanation might be that voters' questions were easier to answer than journalists', so candidates answered the easy questions and side-stepped the more difficult ones.

It is not surprising that moderators asked the "best" question of any study group. They had the more opportunities to pose questions to the candidates which alleviated the temptation to bundle too much information into a single question. Nor is it surprising that audience members asked the "worst" questions. Voters given one chance to speak directly to the current or future president of the United States would want to make the most of the experience. This would explain why they tended to combine at least two subjects in their questions, in some cases as many as four.

As professional interviewers, most journalists have learned to ask questions which might frighten or intimidate the "average" person. This explains why journalists were much more likely than audience members to ask questions defined as "loaded" and "embarrassing." While print and broadcast journalists were relatively similar in their tendency to ask "loaded" questions, print reporters were twice as likely to ask "embarrassing" questions. This may be a function of print reporters' need to go beyond the surface in reporting and writing; to provide details and color as part of their news analysis role.

"Citing recent experience" assumes a knowledge of the latest developments in an area. It is not surprising then, that journalists were more likely to "cite recent experience" in questions. In their reporting roles, journalist have access to more information than the average reader. It is predictable that they would use this knowledge in formulating their questions.

As print reporters generally produce longer and more detailed stories than broadcast reporters, it is not surprising that they were the most likely of the study groups to "cite recent experience" in questions. Conversely, broadcast journalists' news stories are shorter and more time sensitive, perhaps forcing them to "be specific" more often than print reporters.

It is interesting that the candidate who provided "better" answers in a majority of categories was elected President of the United States. Of the candidates, Clinton also was most likely to address the content of questions by providing direct answers. Even though Clinton was the most likely of the three candidates to not answer questions coded "embarrassing," he gave direct answers to non embarrassing questions more than any other candidate. As did other candidates, he seemed most willing to answer questions posed by audience members.

However, it is important to note that Clinton and Perot were able to answer questions based on what they would do if elected president, rather than what they had done as president over the past four years. The necessity for Bush to often answer questions based on his presidential record rather than his platform may have made it more difficult for him to provide "better" answers.

In several cases, respondents wanted to make more of issues than did interviewers. "Taxes" and "Congress" were the favorite themes of candidates, who may have hoped to explain the economy by passing the buck. Candidates also appeared to blame the political process and the media, referring to them twice as often as mentioned in questions. It is unknown why candidates would downplay "education" in answers unless they perceived it to hold less importance than economic and health care issues.

The question remains why candidates gave more direct answers to questions posed by audience members than journalists, when both groups are voters. In terms of addressing issues, it didn't seem to matter to candidate that audience questions were technically "worse" than journalists." It is possible that candidates viewed audience members as being less threatening than journalists, or that candidates felt television viewers would associate with audience members more than journalists. This could cause candidates to "go out of their way" to answer the questions from the audience.

It also is possible that candidates enjoyed talking with audience members more than the media, perhaps urged by their campaign managers to be particularly attentive to "regular folks." Recall George Bush's favorite bumper sticker: "Annoy the Media--Re-elect Bush." If this is the case, it seems candidates least favored print journalists, as they were least likely to have questions answered.

Conclusion

The Freedom Forum Media Studies Center at Columbia University termed the 1992 Presidential election "the season of uncertainty." This uncertainty is partly due to new competition media face from an unlikely source: readers and viewers. Former adviser to Ronald Reagan Michael Deaver and *Rolling Stone* reporter William Greider argued that "the rise of talk shows reflects a backlash against the 'establishment press.'"[12] Greider believes that the public has come to resent "elite" media coverage of "elite" politicians in a year when voters are in a decidedly-anti establishment mood."

Question difficulty aside, this study cannot explain why candidates were much more likely to answer questions posed by non-journalists than journalists during the presidential debates. However, it does undercut the argument that only skilled journalists who ask "better" questions can get straight answers. When asked to explain the direct-access phenomenon that characterized the 1992 Presidential election, CNN talk show host

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[12] Dirk Smillie, "Talking to America: The Rise of Talk Shows in the '92 Campaign," in An Uncertain Season: Reporting in the Postprimary Period, (New York: Columbia University, 1992), p. 23.

Larry King offered one explanation: "How you do it is what counts. Most reporters are incapable of asking simple, three-word answers."[13]

Perhaps then, the uncertainty lies in the technical definition of "better." It may well be that Ostman's model was well suited to the Kennedy era, but outdated in a time of cable, electronic town halls, video cassette recorders, and candidate 800 numbers. Since the audience seemed to have all the answers, a survey may be a good place to start.

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[13] Ibid., p. 26.

Appendix I

Ostman Question/Answer Categories

1)Avoid words with double meanings.

2)Specify exactly the time.

3)Specify exactly the place.

4)Specify exactly the context.

5)Make explicit all alternatives, or make none of them explicit.

6)Unfamiliar or technical subjects ought to be prefaced with explanations or illustrations.

7)Ask questions in terms of the respondent's own immediate and recent experience rather than generalities.

8)It is often helpful to ask questions which elicit information about how many facts a person has about a topic of interest.

9)It is often helpful to ask questions which elicit opinions and attitudes of the respondent - what is thought or felt about a particular subject at a particular point in time.

10)It is often helpful to ask questions which elicit respondent's evaluation of his or her own behavior or thoughts in relation to others.

11)Avoid "loaded" or "leading" questions (those which suggest to the respondent the answer which the interviewer wants to hear).

12)Avoid questions which contain emotionally-charged words.

13)Avoid embarrassing questions, because they often lead to untrue answers.

14)Adhere to the principles of good grammar when asking questions.

15)Avoid multi-part questions (which introduce more than one subject).

16)Avoid long questions.

Appendix II

Definitions of question/ answers topics used in the study.

Family values = Any mention of families and the struggles they face. A family can be any collection of people living under the same roof. This category should be recorded if the words "family values" or "the American family" are stated in the question or answer.

Budget deficit = Referral to the national deficit in the federal budget. This will be in "trillions" of dollars.

Taxes = What Americans pay on income, property and items purchased. Often mentioned in reference to income brackets, meaning how much a person earns from various sources.

Inflation = Refers to a general increase in prices of goods and services.

Unemployment = The number of people who are out of work. This includes those who have been temporarily and seasonally displaced as well as those affected by long-term joblessness.

Welfare= Government-provided support for those unable to support themselves. This category includes food stamps, Aid to Families With Dependent Children, General Assistance, and social security. Issues on Medicare and Medicaid are contained under the heading “health insurance.”

Health insurance= Payment plans designed to cover costs associated with health care. Commonly mentioned plans include Medicare and Medicaid, Blue-Cross Blue-Shield, and Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs). This category should be include if any mention of health insurance, or lack thereof, is mentioned (specific plans need not be named).

Health care= Care provided by hospitals and other organizations. This category also refers to any research designed to improve care. This would include (but is not limited to) mention of research referring to cancer, heart disease and AIDS.

Environment= Refers to mention of anything living in our world that is not human. This also refers to the oceans and ground soil. It also refers to any chemicals, or industry that rely on the environment - such as the timber industry. Also includes mention of the Environmental Protection Agency, and any special interest groups who are concerned with environmental issues, such as Green peace.

Vice Presidents= Any mention of Dan Quayle, Albert Gore, or James Stockdale.

U.S. military spending= Refers to how much money the U.S. government has spent, is spending or will spend on military expenses. This can include what the money was used for, how it was spent, why it was necessary, who spent it, and where it was spent.

Experience of candidates= Refers to the past professional and personal experience of candidates. May include military service, business decisions, and personal issues, such as marital infidelities.

North American Free Trade Agreement= Refers to the agreement which would open the Mexican and Canadian borders for increased importing and exporting with the United States.

Education= Refers to any mention of preschool, K-12, higher education or continuing education. This could include subjects such as paying for college, job training or retraining, and research grants to universities.

U.S. disasters=Refers to disasters taking place in the United States in since January, 1992. Includes Los Angeles riots, hurricanes in Florida and Hawaii, and the Chicago Floods, and follow-up efforts to those disasters.

Campaign process= Refers to the political selection process leading up to the election, including primaries, campaign speeches and stops, and debates. Also refers to the media, including any news organization or journalist covering any activity related to the election, from the primaries, to campaigning and debates. Also included any mention of coverage on issues, such as include fair, unfair; biased, unbiased; balanced, unbalanced.

Special Interest Groups = Any group organized to a promote a specific agenda or goal. This category also includes lobbyists, those people who work to have their position included in federal legislation.

Foreign Affairs = Focus on activities that have, are or will take place outside of the United States. These activities may or may not directly involve the United States. They may include: the Persian Gulf War; deals involving arms for hostages; Soviet Union breakup; China; South Africa; Bosnia; Germany; Nicaragua; and Japan. This category also includes international business, and exports.

Abortion= Refers to any mention of pending legislation, state laws, court cases, demonstrations, case histories, religious concerns, or the actual medical process of abortion. Commonly used phrases include "pro-life," "pro-choice," "anti-abortion" and "a woman's right to choose."

Law enforcement= Refers to any mention of organizations protecting and enforcing federal, state, or city laws. Can also include mentions of police organizations charged with not doing their jobs. Can include law enforcement from the FBI through state and local police. Also includes investigations by these organizations and funds allocated for them. Also includes mention of any crime. Crime is defined as any illegal activity which would be pursued by law enforcement officials, such as drug deals.

Congress= Refers to the legislative branch of the United States federal government, composed of the House of Representatives and the Senate. This category refers to any mention of Congressional activity, from votes to bank scandals. This category also refers to mention of any particular member of Congress.

Trustworthiness= Any mention of placing one's belief and confidence in the ability of a candidate.

Change=Any mention of a plan to make the future different from the past or present. Also includes why such an alteration may or may not be a desirable goal.

Banking= Any reference to the Savings and Loan Crisis, the fate of commercial banking in the United States and overseas, credit, savings, domestic and international loans, currency value, and interest rates.

Women and minorities=Refers to the roles women and minorities play in the work force, education, government, the family, and the military, as well as health resources and programs directed at women and minorities. Minorities includes anyone other than of Caucasian descent.

Business and consumer affairs=Refers to Wall Street and the Stock market, small and privately-owned businesses, consumer protection, U.S. industry, exports and imports (other than those covered through the North American Free Trade Agreement) union and labor issues, and employee safety and retraining.

Table 1

Percentage of Time Interviewers' Questions Met the Following Criteria:

(100 Percent Is Best Possible Score)

Does the Interviewer...	Moderator	Panel	Audience	Cramer's V *
Avoid Double Meanings	100.0	95.8	61.5	.48
Ask Specific Questions	63.6	79.2	61.5	.18
Avoid Providing Potential Answers	63.6	66.7	53.8	.11
Preface Technical Subjects With Explanations	72.7	58.3	53.8	.19
Cite Recent Experience	100.0	58.3	30.8	.39
Elicit Opinions/Attitudes	100.0	100.0	100.0	NA
Avoid Loaded Questions	72.7	54.2	69.2	.33
Avoid Embarrassing Questions	100.0	66.7	92.3	.28
Avoid Multi-Part Questions	81.8	58.3	38.5	.31
Average	84.0	71.0	62.4	

* Cramer's V represents distribution between answers coded "yes" and "no." "No" answers were dropped from the table for convenience. To obtain "no" figures, subtract the percentages listed in the table from 100.

Table 2

Percentage of Time Interviewers' Questions Met the Following Criteria:
(100 Percent Is Best Possible Score)

Does the Interviewer...	Print	Broadcast	Audience	Cramer's V *
Avoid Double Meanings	90.9	100.0	61.5	.49
Ask Specific Questions	72.7	75.0	61.5	.13
Avoid Providing Potential Answers	81.8	58.3	53.8	.22
Preface Technical Subjects With Explanations	63.6	62.5	53.8	.20
Cite Recent Experience	72.7	70.8	30.8	.33
Elicit Opinions/Attitudes	100.0	100.0	100.0	NA
Avoid Loaded Questions	54.5	62.5	69.2	.17
Avoid Embarrassing Questions	54.5	87.5	92.3	.28
Avoid Multi-Part Questions	72.7	62.5	38.5	.26
Average	73.7	75.5	62.4	

* Cramer's V represents distribution between answers coded "yes" and "no." "No" answers were dropped from the table for convenience. To obtain "no" figures, subtract the percentages listed in the table from 100.

Table 3

Percentage of Time Candidates' Answers Met the Following Criteria:

(100 Percent Is Best Possible Score)

Does the Candidate...	Bush	Clinton	Perot	Cramer's V *
Avoid Double Meanings	84.2	93.3	92.9	.14
Give Specific Answers	52.6	73.3	42.9	.25
Avoid Taking All Sides	57.9	86.7	50.0	.26
Preface Technical Subjects With Explanations	63.2	66.7	42.9	.16
Cite Recent Experience	73.7	80.0	78.6	.17
Provide Opinions/Attitudes	100.0	100.0	100.0	NA
Avoid Loaded Answers	73.7	73.3	57.1	.20
Tackle Embarrassing Questions	15.8	6.7	NA	.24
Avoid Multi-Part Answers	36.8	53.3	28.6	.20
Average	62.0	70.4	61.6	

* Cramer's V represents distribution between answers coded "yes" and "no." "No" answers were dropped from the table for convenience. To obtain "no" figures, subtract the percentages listed in the table from 100.

Table 4

Percentage of Time Candidates Answered Questions

	Bush	Clinton	Perot
Did Not Answer Question	21.1	6.7	21.4
Answered Question First	63.2	73.7	35.7
Answered As Part of a Sequence	15.8	20.0	42.9

Cramer's V = .25

Table 5

Percentage of Time Interviewers Had Questions Answered

Candidate...	Print	Broadcast	Audience
Did Not Answer Question	27.3	16.7	7.7
Answered Question First	45.5	50.0	84.6
Answered As Part of a Sequence	27.3	33.3	7.7

Cramer's V = .24

Table 6

Frequency of Subjects Mentioned in Questions and Answers

Questions		Answers	
Health Care	9	Taxes	11
Experience of Candidates	9	Congress	10
Foreign Affairs	7	Health Care	10
Taxes	6	Experience of Candidates	9
U.S. Military	6	Campaign Process	9
Education	5	Foreign Affairs	8
Congress	5	Budget Deficit	7
Budget Deficit	4	Unemployment	5
Unemployment	4	U.S. Military	5
Campaign Process	4	Health Insurance	4
Health Insurance	3	Special Interest Groups	4
Women and Minorities	3	Law Enforcement/Crime	4
U.S. Disasters Since Jan. '92	2	Trustworthiness	4
Law Enforcement/Crime	2	Banking	3
Welfare	1	Women and Minorities	3
N.A. Free Trade Agreement	1	Inflation	2
Family Values	1	Welfare	2
Special Interest Groups	1	N.A. Free Trade Agreement	2
Trustworthiness	1	Education	2
Inflation	0	U.S. Disasters Since Jan. '92	2
Environment	0	Change	2
Vice Presidents	0	Business/Consumer Affairs	2
Abortion	0	Family Values	1
Change	0	Environment	1
Banking	0	Vice Presidents	0
Business/Consumer Affairs	0	Abortion	0

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Community Integration and Media Use:
A New Epoch Requires a New View

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Presented to the Mass Communication & Society Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Annual Convention, Kansas City, Missouri, August 1993.

ABSTRACT

This paper argues for a new perspective in investigations of the capacity of media to perform an integrative function in post-industrial communities. Community is reconceptualized to remove the traditional burden of spatial constraints, and the implications of multiple community memberships are examined. An interactive view of the relationship between media use and community integration is proposed. The argument is made that the integrative impacts of multiple de-massified media characteristic of a post-industrial, de-massified society need to be taken into account. It is proposed that the traditional emphasis on community newspapers as the integrative medium is unduly restrictive.

Research on the influence of newspapers in community integration has been predicated upon assumptions of linear relationships, views of communities as spatially situated entities embedded in industrialized society and notions of single, exclusive community membership. The argument advanced here is that such perspectives inadequately describe the interactive integrative effects of multiple media in a post-industrial society characterized by individual membership in a number of communities. The flaw in media research confined to demonstrating the capacity of newspapers to enhance community integration is located in four anachronistic assumptions. Those assumptions fail to accommodate the shift from an industrial to a post-industrial environment:

(1) The assumption that communities are necessarily spatially delimited entities,

(2) The assumption that newspapers, or, more broadly construed, mass media as artifacts of an industrialized mass society, are the only integrative media,

(3) The assumption that community membership is exclusive rather than plural,

(4) The assumption of a linear, causal relationship between community integration and newspaper or other mass media use.

The shift from industrial to post-industrial environments requires a new set of assumptions that reflect new realities:

(1) The notion of communities as necessarily spatially constrained must be rejected in favor of a view of communities as value based and geographically problematic.

(2) Both sequential and contemporaneous individual

membership in multiple communities must be accommodated.

(3) The emergence of multiple de-massified media responsive to multiple community memberships must be admitted.

(4) The relationships between media use and community integration must be reassessed to accommodate an interactive process that defies linear, causal explanations.

In short, a post-industrial perspective needs to be adopted in the study of the integrative capacity of post-industrial media in post-industrial communities. At the outset, that perspective must respond to a new definition of community that eschews spatial constraints as a necessary defining condition of community.

The imposition of spatial constraints as an unproblematic attribute of community can probably be traced in part to Hillery's 1955 review of the anthropological and sociological literature. That review produced some 94 definitions of community, with territoriality or spatial determinants among the prevailing operationalizations. Characteristic also of those definitions were a sense of ethnocentricity among community members, interaction among community members such that they recognized one another as members of the same community, an accepted normative structure and an awareness by community members of their community as separate and distinct from others. Such separateness, however, fails to take into account the considerably more complex ecological relationships that emerge among both communities and their populations embedded in late industrial and post-industrial societies. In such communities the self sufficiency that permits separateness becomes increasingly uncertain or disappears entirely in the face of ineluctable, interpenetrating relationships. Nonetheless, it is widely evident that separateness, typically defined in terms of spatial boundaries, has been consistently viewed as a defining attribute of community (Snedden, 1926; Gillette, 1926; Hiller, 1941; Warner, 1941; McIver & Page, 1949; Hill & Whiting, 1950).

Similarly, the assumption of spatial limitation as a defining condition of community is clear in media research examining the integrative effects of newspapers. In 1951 Schramm and Ludwig surveyed readership of 10 weekly community newspapers in Iowa and Minnesota with the objective of examining the role of those papers in socializing community members. Time devoted to reading community newspapers, as compared to time committed to reading metropolitan dailies serving the same geographic areas, was taken as a measure of integrative influence. Readers of the community newspapers reported average reading times between 30 and 80 minutes, with a mode of about 50 minutes, or an average of more than four minutes per page. This was contrasted with a little over one minute per page devoted to the Minneapolis Star, a metropolitan daily. The difference, it was concluded, could be explained by the ability of the community newspaper to "knit together its readers with the little understandings which are the essence of both communication and community," thereby fulfilling the desire of readers to "look out into their community and into the lives of their friends and acquaintances" (p. 314).

Evidence for the effectiveness of the community newspaper as a catalyst in integrating individuals and groups into communities has also been claimed by Edelstein and Larsen (1960). Readers of a community newspaper distributed to households in a high-density residential area in Seattle were asked to what degree the publication produced feelings of community identification. Responses, scored on a Guttman scale, led to the conclusion that the newspaper functioned to facilitate community integration, identification apparently having been taken as an indicator of integration.

In an examination of the integrative impact of community newspapers circulated in Chicago suburbs, Janowitz (1967) concluded they functioned as effective instruments for the achievement of social cohesion and community consensus. The results of the study, it is claimed, indicate the utility of the community press in allowing individuals to participate meaningfully in a small unit of a larger social structure.

Similar results were produced by Stamm and Weis in their study of a church community in Seattle (1986). Ties to the community were found to be positively correlated with subscription to the diocesan newspaper.

There appears, however, little evidence in any of the studies to support the postulated direction of the relationship. While it is assumed that readership produces integration, it may equally well be the case that those well integrated in community structures and processes are more likely to be readers of the community press. It may be more likely still that the relationship is processual, a possibility entertained by Stamm, but left largely unelaborated (1985). In either case, there is the likelihood the relationship is one of association not causation. Generally not recognized is that linear relationships may not apply, that newspapers are not the only medium that might have an integrative impact, and that the maintenance of community relationships is in no way necessarily connected to spatial contiguity.

Communities are evolutionary, open systems, the environments of which, territorial and otherwise, seem increasingly evanescent (Chavis and Wandersman, 1990). They are constituted of interacting relationships, all susceptible to change, sometimes unpredictably, as members and institutions, including media, accommodate themselves to the unstable exigencies of the environment. Communities are rarely, if ever, immutable, static phenomena so much as they are entities engaged in an ongoing process of becomming. They are constructed in a continuous series of mutually influential interactions and enactments that defy reduction into atomic elements (Cruz, 1987, pp. 12, 80). To cast community change in simple cause and effect terms ignores the complexity of both exogenous and endogenous influences and relationships (Sarason, 1974, p. 136). Communities have changed, are in the process of changing and will change again (p. 131). Rather than being defined by location, communities are typified by shared emotional connections (MacMillan and Chavis, 1986, p. 14.) Relationships rather than geography are increasingly seen as the common denominator of communities in contemporary society (p.8).

In large measure such a conceptual shift is driven by transportation and communication technologies that readily bridge discontinuities of time and space (Chavis and Wandersman, 1990, p. 61, 77; Altman and Wandersman, 1987, p. xvii; Lee, Oropesa, Metch and Guest, 1986; Guest and Oropesa, 1986, p. 551; Chavis, Hogge, McMillan and Wandersman, 1986, p. 26). Webber (1963) discusses "communities without propinquity" or "communities of interest," grounded on shared social relationships and intellectual pursuits that can be maintained across space and are in no way contingent upon shared geography (p. 29). Among such communities, Webber maintains, are ones based on occupational activities, leisure pastimes, social relationships and intellectual pursuits. Community members are seen as bound by a sense of identity, shared values and interaction requiring, among other things, a common language or symbol system. Without denying that spatially bounded communities continue to exist, the emphasis shifts to communities as dynamic, social, psychological and semiotic constructions characterized more by transiency than permanence (Anderson and Meyer, 1988, p. 16; Cruz, 1987).

The transiency of people and relationships in a post-industrial environment, and its impact on dissolution of the classic, spatially defined community, generates the volitility that defies both linear depictions of community, or communities conceputalized as spatially defined entities (Toffler, 1970). White (1991) suggests such perturbations, or, in the nomenclature of communication, noise, may produce the sort of turbulence that destroys old systems, while permitting the emergence of new, more complex systems and meanings (pp. 266, 268). Extended to the formation of new community forms, these more highly differentiated, more complex systems and meanings might be expected to reflect the de-massified society and its de-massified media described by Toffler (1980, pp. 155-167, 231-233). Instead of "masses of people all receiving the same messages, smaller, de-massfied groups receive and send large amounts of their own imagery to one another" (p. 165).

The psychosocial impacts of mediated communication on construction and maintenance of the imagery of semiotic communities (Anderson & Meyer, 1988, p. 16) has been discussed at length by Shrader (1992), Gergen (1991), and Meyrowitz (1985). Meyrowitz in particular has produced an illuminating examination of social consequences. With reference particularly to television, Meyrowitz maintains that the multiplicity of communities with which one might affiliate, and the values relevant to each, have been largely demystified, expanding dramatically the individual's membership options. Requirements and perquisites of community membership are seen as the products of a mediated discourse in which values and other understandings are constructed, reconstructed, negotiated and enacted within the context of membership in multiple communities. Similarly, Gergen (1991) suggests that media have not only demystified the options, but, coupled with the transiency of relationships characteristic of a de-massified society, virtually compel multiple community memberships.

The notion of a de-massified society is central to a post-industrial view of communities and their artifactual media. De-massification implicates an increased social diversification, with individuals and groups coalescing around their ethnic, religious, professional, sexual and cultural similarities (Toffler, 1980, p. 232). De-massified media respond by permitting development and maintainance of community ties among spatially dispersed members of such communities. Such media include the growing number of limited circulation special interest magazines, electronic media, particularly radio and cable television with its multiplicity of channels, and computer applications providing for communication among members of widely dispersed relatively discrete groups (pp. 155-167). Lacking evidence to the contrary, there would seem no reason for a presumption that media ranging from, say, E-mail to professional journals serving a global academic community are less effective as integrative influences than are newspapers circulated in inner-city neighborhoods.

Multiple, interrelated community memberships implicating geographically dispersed individuals whose relationships are often maintained by mediated communication argues compellingly for a new view of community as concept, revitalized efforts at relevant theoretical constructions and more broadly embracing research programs.

A view of community without spatial constraints offers the opportunity to extend the scope - and thereby the utility - of the concept, allowing broader application through more precise specification of the nature of the community under discussion. Concomitantly, it opens the door for research into the integrative effects within non-territorial communities of the broad range of de-massified media characteristic of a post-industrial society.

Given the extended theoretical boundaries permitted by such a reconceptualization of community, the research question becomes whether publications or other media shared within non-spatially bounded communities have an integrative capacity similar to that claimed for newspapers in more traditional communities. That they may is suggested by Payne, Severn and Dozier in their study of the uses and gratifications associated with readership of special interest magazines (1988). That study suggests shared interests within each of two geographically dispersed subscriber samples were better predictors of magazine choice than were a variety of demographic variables.

The extension of such work, however, will require more than the conceptual rapproachment already suggested. Future theoretical and empirical work will be enriched by examination of the integrative impacts of a range of media across diverse communities typified more by common interests than by spatial definition (Webber, 1963). Adequate theory needs to account for multiple community memberships that may occur either sequentially or contemporaneously, recognizing that post-industrial communities are populated by individuals whose needs, interests and objectives span community boundaries. At the same time, the integrative influence of multiple media needs to be taken into account. Here, there are two concerns: the integrative impact of multiple media on the individual's membership in a single community and the differential integrative impact of multiple media on the individual's membership in various communities. Different media, it needs to be recognized may have different integrative impacts for different individuals in the positions they occupy in their multiple community memberships. Moreover, integrative differences themselves may be transient. That media content is differentially interpreted and accommodated in various contexts is made clear by Anderson and Meyer's discussion of semiotic communities and accommodation theory (1988).

The specification of such differences and the conditions under which they occur need to be at the core of new, clearly delineated research programs directed at accounting for the integrative influences of post-industrial media for the populations of post-industrial communities. Additionally, there is a need for research specifying those media that transcend community boundaries, providing some linkage among various social sectors. While mass media are inclusive, de-massified media tend to be exclusive, specifying both those who belong and, importantly, those who do not.

Continued work guided by assumptions of linear causality, exclusive membership in spatially defined communities and the influences attributed to mass media no longer provides sufficient explanation of the integrative capapcity of post-industial media in post-industrial communities. Contemporary realities must propel a new view that accommodates the complexity of interactive, systemic, plural relationships among communities, their populations and the panoply of media in use.

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By

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Presented to the Mass Communication & Society Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Annual Convention, Kansas City, Missouri, August 1993.

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(1) The notion of communities as necessarily spatially constrained must be rejected in favor of a view of communities as value based and geographically problematic.

(2) Both sequential and contemporaneous individual

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(3) The emergence of multiple de-massified media responsive to multiple community memberships must be admitted.

(4) The relationships between media use and community integration must be reassessed to accommodate an interactive process that defies linear, causal explanations.

In short, a post-industrial perspective needs to be adopted in the study of the integrative capacity of post-industrial media in post-industrial communities. At the outset, that perspective must respond to a new definition of community that eschews spatial constraints as a necessary defining condition of community.

The imposition of spatial constraints as an unproblematic attribute of community can probably be traced in part to Hillery's 1955 review of the anthropological and sociological literature. That review produced some 94 definitions of community, with territoriality or spatial determinants among the prevailing operationalizations. Characteristic also of those definitions were a sense of ethnocentricity among community members, interaction among community members such that they recognized one another as members of the same community, an accepted normative structure and an awareness by community members of their community as separate and distinct from others. Such separateness, however, fails to take into account the considerably more complex ecological relationships that emerge among both communities and their populations embedded in late industrial and post-industrial societies. In such communities the self sufficiency that permits separateness becomes increasingly uncertain or disappears entirely in the face of ineluctable, interpenetrating relationships. Nonetheless, it is widely evident that separateness, typically defined in terms of spatial boundaries, has been consistently viewed as a defining attribute of community (Snedden, 1926; Gillette, 1926; Hiller, 1941; Warner, 1941; McIver & Page, 1949; Hill & Whiting, 1950).

Similarly, the assumption of spatial limitation as a defining condition of community is clear in media research examining the integrative effects of newspapers. In 1951 Schramm and Ludwig surveyed readership of 10 weekly community newspapers in Iowa and Minnesota with the objective of examining the role of those papers in socializing community members. Time devoted to reading community newspapers, as compared to time committed to reading metropolitan dailies serving the same geographic areas, was taken as a measure of integrative influence. Readers of the community newspapers reported average reading times between 30 and 80 minutes, with a mode of about 50 minutes, or an average of more than four minutes per page. This was contrasted with a little over one minute per page devoted to the Minneapolis Star, a metropolitan daily. The difference, it was concluded, could be explained by the ability of the community newspaper to "knit together its readers with the little understandings which are the essence of both communication and community," thereby fulfilling the desire of readers to "look out into their community and into the lives of their friends and acquaintances" (p. 314).

Evidence for the effectiveness of the community newspaper as a catalyst in integrating individuals and groups into communities has also been claimed by Edelstein and Larsen (1960). Readers of a community newspaper distributed to households in a high-density residential area in Seattle were asked to what degree the publication produced feelings of community identification. Responses, scored on a Guttman scale, led to the conclusion that the newspaper functioned to facilitate community integration, identification apparently having been taken as an indicator of integration.

In an examination of the integrative impact of community newspapers circulated in Chicago suburbs, Janowitz (1967) concluded they functioned as effective instruments for the achievement of social cohesion and community consensus. The results of the study, it is claimed, indicate the utility of the community press in allowing individuals to participate meaningfully in a small unit of a larger social structure.

Similar results were produced by Stamm and Weis in their study of a church community in Seattle (1986). Ties to the community were found to be positively correlated with subscription to the diocesan newspaper.

There appears, however, little evidence in any of the studies to support the postulated direction of the relationship. While it is assumed that readership produces integration, it may equally well be the case that those well integrated in community structures and processes are more likely to be readers of the community press. It may be more likely still that the relationship is processual, a possibility entertained by Stamm, but left largely unelaborated (1985). In either case, there is the likelihood the relationship is one of association not causation. Generally not recognized is that linear relationships may not apply, that newspapers are not the only medium that might have an integrative impact, and that the maintenance of community relationships is in no way necessarily connected to spatial contiguity.

Communities are evolutionary, open systems, the environments of which, territorial and otherwise, seem increasingly evanescent (Chavis and Wandersman, 1990). They are constituted of interacting relationships, all susceptible to change, sometimes unpredictably, as members and institutions, including media, accommodate themselves to the unstable exigencies of the environment. Communities are rarely, if ever, immutable, static phenomena so much as they are entities engaged in an ongoing process of becomming. They are constructed in a continuous series of mutually influential interactions and enactments that defy reduction into atomic elements (Cruz, 1987, pp. 12, 80). To cast community change in simple cause and effect terms ignores the complexity of both exogenous and endogenous influences and relationships (Sarason, 1974, p. 136). Communities have changed, are in the process of changing and will change again (p. 131). Rather than being defined by location, communities are typified by shared emotional connections (MacMillan and Chavis, 1986, p. 14.) Relationships rather than geography are increasingly seen as the common denominator of communities in contemporary society (p.8).

In large measure such a conceptual shift is driven by transportation and communication technologies that readily bridge discontinuities of time and space (Chavis and Wandersman, 1990, p. 61, 77; Altman and Wandersman, 1987, p. xvii; Lee, Oropesa, Metch and Guest, 1986; Guest and Oropesa, 1986, p. 551; Chavis, Hogge, McMillan and Wandersman, 1986, p. 26). Webber (1963) discusses "communities without propinquity" or "communities of interest," grounded on shared social relationships and intellectual pursuits that can be maintained across space and are in no way contingent upon shared geography (p. 29). Among such communities, Webber maintains, are ones based on occupational activities, leisure pastimes, social relationships and intellectual pursuits. Community members are seen as bound by a sense of identity, shared values and interaction requiring, among other things, a common language or symbol system. Without denying that spatially bounded communities continue to exist, the emphasis shifts to communities as dynamic, social, psychological and semiotic constructions characterized more by transiency than permanence (Anderson and Meyer, 1988, p. 16; Cruz, 1987).

The transiency of people and relationships in a post-industrial environment, and its impact on dissolution of the classic, spatially defined community, generates the volitility that defies both linear depictions of community, or communities conceptualized as spatially defined entities (Toffler, 1970). White (1991) suggests such perturbations, or, in the nomenclature of communication, noise, may produce the sort of turbulence that destroys old systems, while permitting the emergence of new, more complex systems and meanings (pp. 266, 268). Extended to the formation of new community forms, these more highly differentiated, more complex systems and meanings might be expected to reflect the de-massified society and its de-massified media described by Toffler (1980, pp. 155-167, 231-233). Instead of "masses of people all receiving the same messages, smaller, de-massfied groups receive and send large amounts of their own imagery to one another" (p. 165).

The psychosocial impacts of mediated communication on construction and maintenance of the imagery of semiotic communities (Anderson & Meyer, 1988, p. 16) has been discussed at length by Shrader (1992), Gergen (1991), and Meyrowitz (1985). Meyrowitz in particular has produced an illuminating examination of social consequences. With reference particularly to television, Meyrowitz maintains that the multiplicity of communities with which one might affiliate, and the values relevant to each, have been largely demystified, expanding dramatically the individual's membership options. Requirements and perquisites of community membership are seen as the products of a mediated discourse in which values and other understandings are constructed, reconstructed, negotiated and enacted within the context of membership in multiple communities. Similarly, Gergen (1991) suggests that media have not only demystified the options, but, coupled with the transiency of relationships characteristic of a de-massified society, virtually compel multiple community memberships.

The notion of a de-massified society is central to a post-industrial view of communities and their artifactual media. De-massification implicates an increased social diversification, with individuals and groups coalescing around their ethnic, religious, professional, sexual and cultural similarities (Toffler, 1980, p. 232). De-massified media respond by permitting development and maintainance of community ties among spatially dispersed members of such communities. Such media include the growing number of limited circulation special interest magazines, electronic media, particularly radio and cable television with its multiplicity of channels, and computer applications providing for communication among members of widely dispersed relatively discrete groups (pp. 155-167). Lacking evidence to the contrary, there would seem no reason for a presumption that media ranging from, say, E-mail to professional journals serving a global academic community are less effective as integrative influences than are newspapers circulated in inner-city neighborhoods.

Multiple, interrelated community memberships implicating geographically dispersed individuals whose relationships are often maintained by mediated communication argues compellingly for a new view of community as concept, revitalized efforts at relevant theoretical constructions and more broadly embracing research programs.

A view of community without spatial constraints offers the opportunity to extend the scope - and thereby the utility - of the concept, allowing broader application through more precise specification of the nature of the community under discussion. Concomitantly, it opens the door for research into the integrative effects within non-territorial communities of the broad range of de-massified media characteristic of a post-industrial society.

Given the extended theoretical boundaries permitted by such a reconceptualization of community, the research question becomes whether publications or other media shared within non-spatially bounded communities have an integrative capacity similar to that claimed for newspapers in more traditional communities. That they may is suggested by Payne, Severn and Dozier in their study of the uses and gratifications associated with readership of special interest magazines (1988). That study suggests shared interests within each of two geographically dispersed subscriber samples were better predictors of magazine choice than were a variety of demographic variables.

The extension of such work, however, will require more than the conceptual rapproachment already suggested. Future theoretical and empirical work will be enriched by examination of the integrative impacts of a range of media across diverse communities typified more by common interests than by spatial definition (Webber, 1963). Adequate theory needs to account for multiple community memberships that may occur either sequentially or contemporaneously, recognizing that post-industrial communities are populated by individuals whose needs, interests and objectives span community boundaries. At the same time, the integrative influence of multiple media needs to be taken into account. Here, there are two concerns: the integrative impact of multiple media on the individual's membership in a single community and the differential integrative impact of multiple media on the individual's membership in various communities. Different media, it needs to be recognized may have different integrative impacts for different individuals in the positions they occupy in their multiple community memberships. Moreover, integrative differences themselves may be transient. That media content is differentially interpreted and accommodated in various contexts is made clear by Anderson and Meyer's discussion of semiotic communities and accommodation theory (1988).

The specification of such differences and the conditions under which they occur need to be at the core of new, clearly delineated research programs directed at accounting for the integrative influences of post-industrial media for the populations of post-industrial communities. Additionally, there is a need for research specifying those media that transcend community boundaries, providing some linkage among various social sectors. While mass media are inclusive, de-massified media tend to be exclusive, specifying both those who belong and, importantly, those who do not.

Continued work guided by assumptions of linear causality, exclusive membership in spatially defined communities and the influences attributed to mass media no longer provides sufficient explanation of the integrative capapcity of post-industial media in post-industrial communities. Contemporary realities must propel a new view that accommodates the complexity of interactive, systemic, plural relationships among communities, their populations and the panoply of media in use.

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STRUCTURES OF NEWS, STRUCTURES OF DISCOURSE

Reappraising Discourse Analysis and Its Implications for News Studies

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STRUCTURES OF NEWS, STRUCTURES OF DISCOURSE

Reappraising Discourse Analysis and Its Implications for News Studies

After over twenty years of development, discourse analysis as both a theoretical and a methodological approach has much to offer to the study of news. The focus of this study is twofold: first, to reappraise the importance of discourse analysis in the study of news; and second to critically examine two of the major discourse analysis models in media studies, namely van Dijk's news discourse model and Hodge and Kress's critical linguistics/social semiotics approach. The study concludes that while both models provide valuable insights, and remarkable methods, to the critical study of media messages, they are not without limitations. A more genre- and culture-specific model is much needed.

STRUCTURES OF NEWS, STRUCTURES OF DISCOURSE

Reappraising Discourse Analysis and Its Implications for News Studies

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in "discourse analysis" across disciplines. There is, however, not only a lack of cooperation amongst these disciplines, but also a regrettable absence of consensus as to what discourse analysis is and how it should be applied. The fact that most discourse analysis frameworks tend to encompass everything under their umbrellas (Bell, 1991) may have contributed to this limitation. Despite its terminological problems, however, discourse analysis is one of the most important developments in linguistics and various other fields because of its remarkable capability to analyze the deep structures and functions of language in use.

This paper will first define, and differentiate, the concepts of discourse, text, and genre. It will then critically examine two major approaches in the application of discourse analysis to the study of news, namely van Dijk's news discourse model and Hodge and Kress's critical linguistics/social semiotics framework. The merits, as well as limitations, of these two approaches will be discussed. A sketch of a more culture- and genre-specific alternative model which addresses issues of discourse studies across cultures will then be offered.

What is discourse analysis?

Just like no single agreeable definition of ideology could be reached, yet, by scholars in various disciplines (e.g., Eagleton, 1991), definitions and interpretations of discourse also take different, and sometimes contrasting, forms. They range from the limited view which claims that discourse is "text as a suprasentential unit of meaning, an extension of the syntactic and logical structuring of a sentence" (Seidel, 1985, p.44) and that discourse analysis refers to attempts to "study the organization of language above the sentence or above the clause, and therefore to study larger linguistic units, such as...written text" (Stubbs, 1983, p.1), to the expansive definitions of discourse as language in use (e.g., Yule 1983; van Dijk, 1985), as nothing less than the social process per se (e.g., Fowler, Hodge, Kress & Trew, 1979; Yule, 1983; Goldman & Rajagopal, 1991), or simply as ideology (Heck, 1980; Volosinov, 1973).

Traditionally, the concern of linguistic analysis has been on the construction of sentences. But since the late 1960s and early 1970s, there has been a development of interest in analyzing how sentences work in sequence to produce coherent stretches of language (Crystal, 1987). And this search for alternative language theories did not stop at the field of linguistics, scholars from sociology, psychology, anthropology, ethnography, literary criticism, and computer science have all started their pursuit of this interdisciplinary theories/models of language and society (see, for example, de Beaugrande, 1980; Crystal, 1987). The application of discourse analysis to the study of news, however, has been a fairly new phenomenon. Most notable are work done by Teun A. van Dijk and his associates in Amsterdam and a small group of Australian-British based sociolinguists led by Gunther Kress and Robert Hodge. Their approaches will be examined in a later section.

In the literary and sociolinguistic traditions, discourse analysis has its theoretical groundwork laid by Volosinov (1973) with a distinct neo-Marxist, structuralist influence. The process and structure of language in society is viewed to be inseparable from its contexts, especially those of power and ideology.

Unlike the traditional linguistic studies that focus on sentences in isolation, discourse analysis is viewed as a unifying focus for linguistics and sociology because of its emphasis on the language users' semantic and syntactic options in terms of interactional strategies used by individuals, groups and classes in the society (Seidel, 1985). Instead of viewing language and grammar as rules, discourse analysts treat them as something of choices. The functions and structures of language and its use, therefore, are of critical importance (Halliday, 1978).

Text, genre, and discourse

From the traditional sentential linguistic studies evolved text linguistics and discourse analysis. Both concern the structures and functions of larger linguistic units, and both were developed at about the same time. They are, as a result, sometimes considered identical (e.g., Halliday, 1978; Seidel, 1985). The differences between these two approaches are nevertheless significant and should not be overlooked. Adding to the confusion, however, is the fact that contrasting views and disagreement exist even among those who consider text and discourse to be two different concepts. Some scholars believe that the differences between text and discourse reside in the situation in which language functions. Crystal (1987), for example, has suggested that discourse analysis focusses on the structure of spoken language, whereas text analysis on the written. There are also others that suggest texts to be components of discourses (e.g., de Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981; de Beaugrande, 1980). In their view, discourses are sets of mutually relevant texts, while texts are defined as communicative occurrences. Along a similar line, van Dijk (1988) has described text linguistics as a branch of discourse analysis.

Of those who have differing views on what text and discourse are, and how they differ, Gunther Kress and Robert Hodge (Hodge & Kress, 1988; Hodge, 1990; Kress, 1985; Kress, 1989) seem to have offered some of the more clearly defined observations and differentiation of these two theoretical and methodological approaches.

Discourse is referred to by Hodge and Kress (1988) as the social process in which texts are embedded while text is the concrete material object produced in discourse. In other words, text is a mere trace of discourses. Kress (1989) goes on to define texts as manifestations and meanings of discourses. He further suggests that meanings not only find their expression in text, but also negotiated in them. Consequently, texts are the sites of struggle, with differing discourses contending and struggling for dominance. Texts also are, in Kress's view, the sites of attempts to resolve problems, because "every text arises out of a particular problematic" (p.12).

Kress (1985) has tried to differentiate between text and discourse on the basis of the disciplines where these two approaches have been applied, namely the fields of linguistics and sociology. He also differentiates text and discourse in terms of their foci and aims of investigation. For example, when the "materiality, form, and structure of language are at issue, the emphasis tends to be textual;" and where the "content, function, and social significance of language are at issue, the study tends to be of discourse" (p. 27). Table 1 summarizes Kress's observations of the differences between text and discourse in terms of their theoretical basis and content foci.

(Table 1 About Here)

Genre is another important concept emphasized by Kress (1985,

1988) and Hodge (1990) in discourse analysis which has so far been ignored by most analysts. Genre is defined as "systems of classifications of types of texts" (Hodge, 1990, p.22). Because genres have specific forms and meanings, and they derive from and encode the functions and meanings of the social occasions, they provide a "precise index and catalogue of the relevant social occasions of a community at a given time" (Kress, 1989, p.19). The following observation illustrates the interrelationships among text, genre, and discourse:

> The meanings of texts are therefore derived not only from the meanings of the discourse which give rise to and appear in particular texts, but also from the meanings of the genre of a particular text. Both discourse and genre carry specific and socially determined meanings. Discourse carries meanings about the nature of the institution from which it derives; genre carries meanings about the conventional social occasions on which texts arise. (Kress, 1989, p.20)

The van Dijkian model of news discourse analysis

The foregoing discussion was an effort to clarify some of the terminologies in discourse analysis. As was alluded to earlier, the application of discourse analysis to the studies of news has been a fairly new phenomenon, albeit it has been widely studied and applied in other disciplines. One of the most prolific discourse analysts Teun A. van Dijk is also one of the pioneers in examining news as a discourse process and in applying discourse analysis to study the structures of news. More specifically, he studies news reports as "particular types of language use or text and as specific kinds of sociocultural practice" (van Dijk, 1988b, p.2).

van Dijk's discourse analysis model is one of dichotomy, it is dichotomized into textual/contextual, as well as global/local dimensions. In the contextual sense, focus is placed on the structural descriptions of the context, such as cognitive processes and representations or sociocultural factors (van Dijk, 1988a). Its major function is to define the systematic relationships between the structures and functions of language and its larger socio-cultural contexts (van Dijk, 1977). Textual dimensions, on the other hand, account for the discourse structures at various levels of descriptions. The textual dimension of analysis is then further divided into global and local structures.

Global structures, as explained by van Dijk (1980), are accounted for in terms of macrostructures, which are "higher-level semantic or conceptual structures that organize the 'local' microstructures of discourse, interaction, and their cognitive processing" (p.v). Macrostructures, in turn, are distinguished from superstructures. These are more schematic "global 'form' of the macrostructural 'content'" (p.v). Microstructures basically cover the more usual syntax, semantics, or pragmatics as applied to isolated sentences as most the traditional linguistic studies do (van Dijk, 1988a).

A typical van Dijkian news discourse analysis usually follow the procedures of macro- and micro-level analyses. At the macro-level, thematic analysis which may cover headlines, topic categories, thematic structures, and main actors would be conducted. By thematic analysis we understand the "hierarchical organization of themes or topics of a text" because it defines the most important information in a text (van Dijk, 1988b, p.72). An analysis of schematic structures, the "overall form of a discourse" (van Dijk, 1985, p.69), would then be followed.

To serve as an example, the macro-level results of a recent study using van Dijk's discourse analysis model to compare the BBC and VOA's coverage of the 1991 failed Soviet coup are provided (Wang, 1993). Tables 1 and 2 list the topics and subtopics found in BBC and VOA's news stories on the coup. These topics address major questions about the coup, e.g. the circumstances, results, and major results of the event, its contexts and historical backgrounds, and reactions and consequences, etc.

(Table 2 About Here)

(Table 3 About Here)

After the lists of topics and topic categories are compiled, Figures 1 and 2 organize these topics into thematic structures. As these two figures have clearly demonstrated, structurally these two news items are very similar. The questions of why and how in both items, however, are more or less overlooked.

(Figure 1 About Here)

(Figure 2 About Here)

The superstructure schemata (or schematic superstructures) of the news episode as described by BBC and VOA were then compared to decide the overall "forms" of the discourse. As Figure 3 shows, the BBC item presents a more complete schema for the news episode, whereas the VOA story presents a simpler superstructure schema for the story (Figure 4)

(Figure 3 About Here)

(Figure 4 About Here)

Hodge and Kress's syntagmatic model: a critical linguistics/social semiotics approach

Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress, along with their associates (e.g. Roger Fowler and Tony Trew), have developed their own sociolinguistic method, based partly on Halliday's theories, in analyzing discourses. The main focus of their work is on how language, syntactic rules to be more specific, serve(s) as tools to articulate ideology and to legitimize institutions of power in society (Fowler, 1985), and how underlying ideologies are embodied in linguistic expression (Bell, 1991). It is their belief that all social interaction and institutions involve displays of power, and of which mass media are a part (Kress, 1989).

In their view, society is constituted by structures and relations of power, and characterized by conflict and cohesion. So for them, "texts and contexts, agents and objects of meaning, social structures and forces and their complex interrelationships together constitute the minimal and irreducible object of semiotic analysis" (Hodge & Kress, 1988, p.viii).

Kress and Hodge have presented their syntagmatic models in the book *Language as ideology* (1979). Just as Halliday (1978), a very important functional linguist, believes that language rules are of choice, and not of rules, Kress and Hodge (1979) also assert that the grammar of a language is its theory of reality, that it is never innocent nor neutral as most people would tend to believe.

Simply put, the syntagmatic models include several basic models for English: actionals or actional models, and relationals or relational models.

As their name indicates, actional models are about action. The first part of the actional model is that of the transactive model which involves one or two objects in a specified relation to a verbal process. One of the two is seen as causing the action, the other as affected by it. For example, in the sentence "police shoot rioters," the actor or the agent is the police, while rioters the affected. The second part of the actional model is that of the non-transactive, where there is minimally one entity related to a process. An example would be "the policemen run." It is difficult to know if the entity is actor or affected because there is only one involved.

The relational models do not involve relations of any type of actions or processes, only of simple relations. The relationals also include two subtypes, one equative, the other attributive. The equative model involves relations between two entities, the sentence "the sports master is an ex-football international" (Kress & Hodge, 1979, p.8) is an example. The attributive model involves relations between an entity and a quality, e.g., "his footwork is superb."

Transformations is another kind of language operation that has been an important part in Hodge et al.'s sociolinguistic work. In their account, transformations are "a set of operations on basic forms, deleting, substituting, combining, or reordering a syntagm or its elements" (Kress & Hodge, 1979, p.9). For example, the sentence "Ten demonstrators were killed" is transformed from "[someone or something] kill ten demonstrators." The actor, someone or something, in this case is deleted, and the elements of the syntagm are reordered to become passive. Kress and Hodge (1979) believe that transformations are performed to serve two functions, economy and distortion. Some of the studies using the actional, relational, and the transformational models appear in Fowler et al.'s 1979 book *Language and control*.

Discussions and implications

As Bell (1991) has suggested, discourse analysis framework has much to offer to the study of news language and processes. It shows that insights are gained in the process of rigorous linguistic analysis. By analyzing news structures both at the macro- and the micro-levels, and addressing not only the "what" question but also the "how," while at the same time relating them to the larger socio-cultural contexts, discourse analysis is shown to be a worthy complement to the traditional quantitative content analysis methodology.

The afore-discussed two discourse analysis approaches, however, are not without problems and limitations.

Three major deficiencies can be found in Hodge et al.'s approach. Firstly is their belief that there is ideological significance in every syntactic option (Bell, 1991). It is like Eagleton's (1991) criticism of the broadening concepts of ideology and power that "if there are no values and beliefs not bound up with power, then the term ideology threatens to expand to vanishing point. Any word which covers everything loses its cutting edge and dwindles to an empty sound" (p.7). The same can be said about some Hodge et al.'s belief in the omnipresence of ideology and power in all syntactic and grammatical options.

Secondly, the fact that Hodge et al. focus their investigation on how language can be manipulated by the dominant groups or classes in society to sustain their power and/or interests, is unjust. It has been shown that discourse can not only reproduce power that favors the dominant groups or classes, it can also operate as instrument of empowerment for marginalized or disadvantaged groups (Huspek, 1993).

And finally, unlike van Dijk's news discourse model which focusses both at the global as well as local, and contextual as well as textual, levels, Kress and Hodge's method tends to be operating more on a local scale. This results in the relative narrow scope that their method can offer to discourse analysts.

As the foregoing has suggested, because van Dijk's news discourse model emphasizes both the macro- and micro-structures of the news, it appears to be a superb vehicle for the study of news messages and their meanings, both covert and overt, especially when used with the more traditional quantitative content analysis method. There are, however, two major limitations of this discourse analysis model, one cultural, and the other has to do with genre.

First of all, van Dijk's model is found to be deficient in the sense that it needs to be more culture specific. As important as comparative news, or media, studies are, and with so much content encoded in style and linguistic form, the fact that his model addresses only the 'English' language is rather limited in scope. In 1984, van Dijk and his associates conducted a large scale comparative study for UNESCO on the assassination of president-elect Bechir Gemayel of Lebanon (see van Dijk, 1988b). They analyzed, both quantitatively and qualitatively, more than 700 articles from 138 newspapers in dozens of languages. It is through this kind of multi-cultural, multi-linguistic comparative studies that this specific problem of his model surfaces. It is especially serious at the micro-structural level of analysis since some, if not most, of the languages under study need to be translated into English for analysis which will inevitably result in the loss of these languages' original forms and styles that are extremely important in a linguistic analysis. A model that would address linguistic and cultural differences is therefore much needed.

The second limitation of the van Dijkian model lies in the fact that it, so far, has failed to address the importance different genres would have on news discourses. His model, as well as most of his news studies, focus only on print news. How would broadcast news discourses be different from the print ones? How are editorials differed from straight news? These are some of the important questions that need to be taken into account in news discourse analysis. Hodge et al.'s methods and studies have been more genre-sensitive in this aspect.

After the foregoing discussion, one may conclude that these two approaches, although different, are clearly complementary, albeit both need to address more of the important questions of how can comparative discourse analysis done more adequately across cultural, national, and linguistic boundaries. Overall,discourse analysis, both as a theoretical and methodological approach, in news and media studies deserve much serious attention and thought.

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TABLE 1

Differences between text & discourse (based on Kress, 1985)

	Discourse	Text
Basis	Sociological	Linguistics
Foci/Aims of Study	- content - function - social significance	- materiality - form - structure

TABLE 2

Topics and topic categories in the thematic structure of the BBC news report (6:21am, Aug. 19, 1991)

Topic Category	Topic	
a. Circumstances	-	Gorbachev (G.) has been replaced as President of the Soviet Union
b. Event/Reasons (1)	-	G. was unable to continue in office because of the state of his health
c. Consequences/Actors (1)	-	A decree to this effect has been issued by the Soviet Vice-President Yanayev who had taken up the duties of President today
d. Consequences/Reasons (2)	-	i. A state of emergency has been declared ii. It was designed to meet the demands of the population iii. There was a need to adopt the most resolute measures to avert a slide towards a national catastrophe which was threatening the country's territorial integrity iv. The emergency could be extended in individual localities
e. Context (1)	-	The move comes 3 days after G.'s former close aide Yakavlev left the Party and predicted a coup d'etat by hard-liners
f. Actors (2)	-	The decree was signed by 3 hardliners: Yanayev, Pavlov, and Baklanov
g. Consequences (3)	-	i. A committee has been set up to administer the emergency powers ii. Senior officials of the KGB, the army and the Interior Ministry are on the committee
h. Consequences (4)	-	i. Statement by the committee called on all citizens to recognise their duty to the country and to give the committee their full support ii. It warned that extremist forces had arisen attempting to liquidate the Soviet Union iii. It said the crisis of power has had a catastrophic impact on the economy iv. The statement insisted that this was not the language of dictatorship. The committee supported democracy and political reform
i. Actor/Event/Time/ Location/Context (3)	-	G. left Moscow for the Crimea on August the fourth, 4 days after he and Bush signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
j. Context (3)	-	G. was due back today for the signing tomorrow of the new treaty of union which sets out a new relationship between the republics and the central government
k. Speculations/Analysis	-	i. The events suggest a concrete attempt by hardliners to take power ii. G. and his supporters are bound to resist the moves iii. The important question is how Yeltsin will react
l. Actor/Consequence (4)	-	No mention of G.'s position as General-Secretary of the Soviet communist party

TABLE 3

Topics and topic categories in the thematic structure of the news report carried by the VOA (1:39am, Aug.19)

Topic Category		Topic
a. Circumstances	-	G. has been replaced
b. Consequences (1)	-	A state of emergency has been declared
c. Actors/Reasons (1)	-	Vice-President Yanayev has taken over as President because G. is unable to fulfill his duties for reasons of health
d. Actors/Location (2)	-	No details about the condition of G., who had been reported on vacation at the Black Sea
e. Actor/Consequences (3)	-	Yanayev declared a 6-month state of emergency in parts of the country
f. Event/Reasons (1)	-	The country is in mortal danger from extremist forces which seek to dismantle the Soviet Union and seize power at any cost
g. Consequences (3)	-	A State Committee for the state of emergency has been created to administer the country
h. Actors (4)	-	The Committee includes hard-line communists KGB Chief Kryuchkov, Defense Minister Yazov, Prime Minister Pavlov, Interior Minister Pugo, Yanayev, and other officials
i. Context (1)	-	The announcement came on the eve of the planned signing of a new union treaty which was to realign ties between Moscow and individual Soviet Republics
j. US reaction	-	US officials called the situation serious. Scowcroft has informed Bush of the developments
k. Event/Reasons (2)	-	The new leadership said that the state of emergency was imposed to avert society's slide toward a national catastrophe and to guarantee legality and order

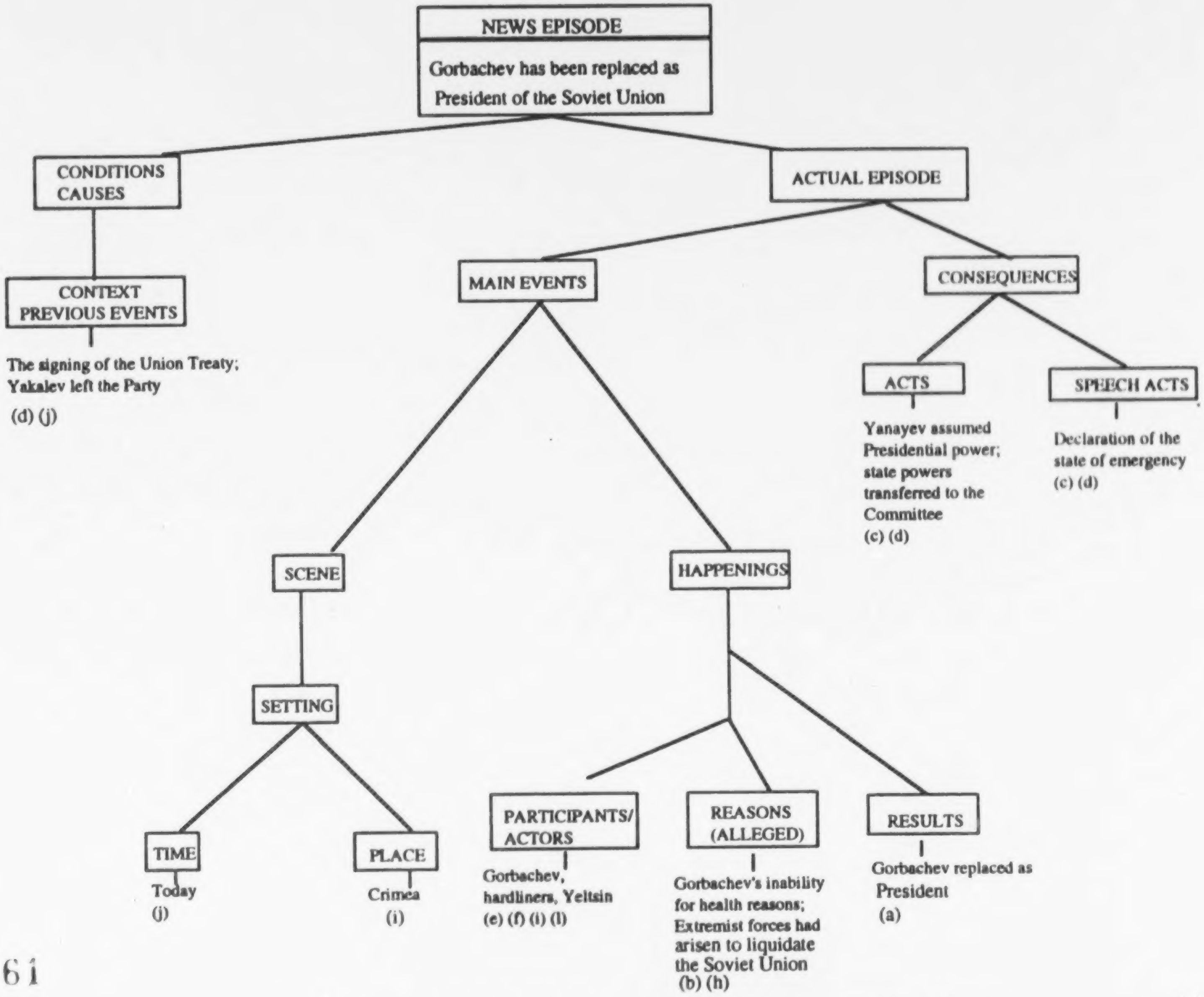
NEWS EPISODE
Gorbachev has been replaced as President of the Soviet Union
CONDITIONS CAUSES
ACTUAL EPISODE
CONTEXT PREVIOUS EVENTS
The signing of the Union Treaty; Yakalev left the Party
(d) (j)
MAIN EVENTS
CONSEQUENCES
ACTS
Yanayev assumed Presidential power; state powers transferred to the Committee
(c) (d)
SPEECH ACTS
Declaration of the state of emergency
(c) (d)
SCENE
HAPPENINGS
SETTING
TIME
Today
(j)
PLACE
Crimea
(i)
PARTICIPANTS/ ACTORS
Gorbachev, hardliners, Yeltsin
(e) (f) (i) (l)
REASONS (ALLEGED)
Gorbachev's inability for health reasons; Extremist forces had arisen to liquidate the Soviet Union
(b) (h)
RESULTS
Gorbachev replaced as President
(a)

FIGURE 1 The thematic structure of the news episode as described by the *BBC World Service*
Letters between paranthesis refer to themes listed in Table 2

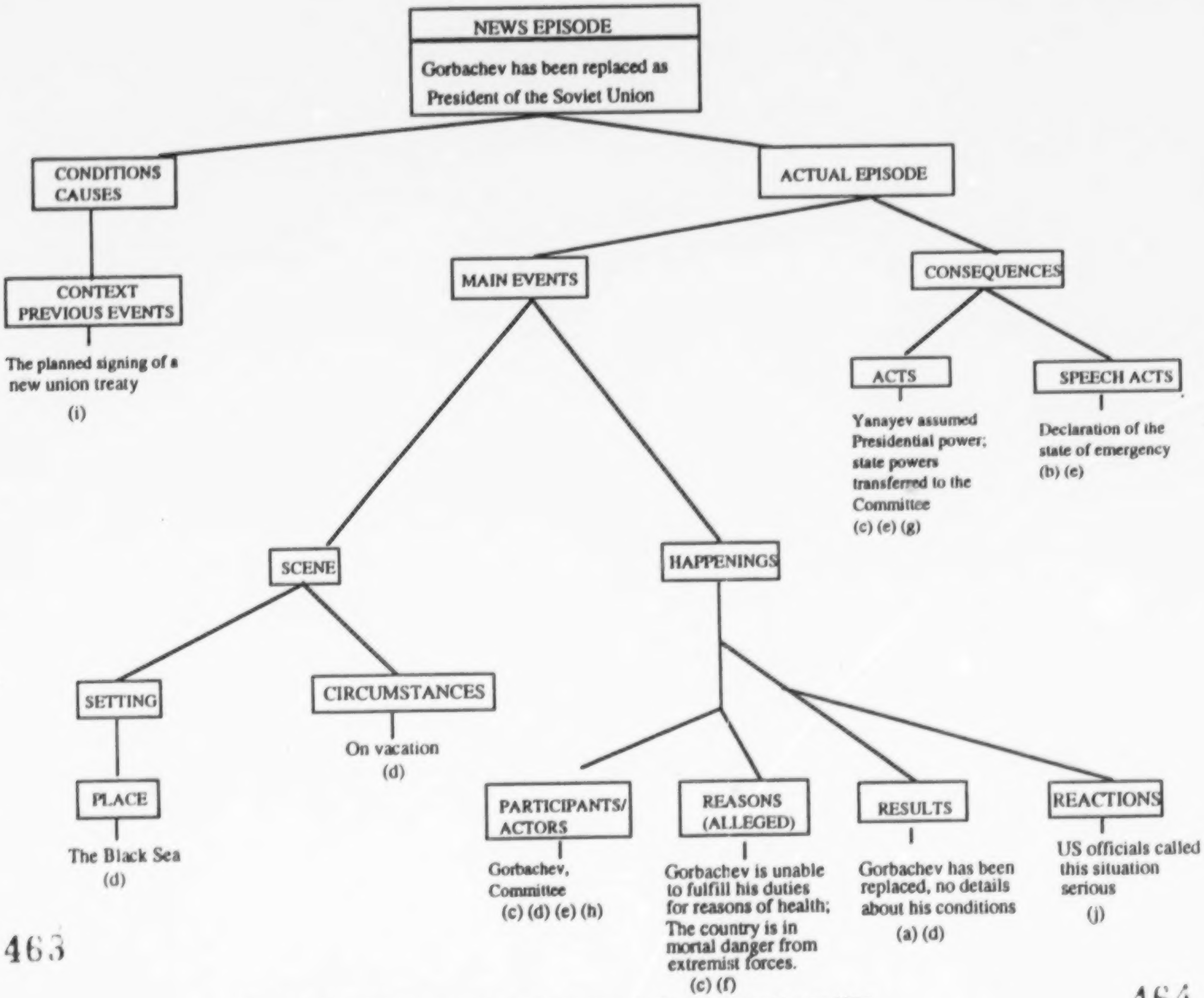
NEWS EPISODE
Gorbachev has been replaced as President of the Soviet Union
CONDITIONS CAUSES
ACTUAL EPISODE
CONTEXT PREVIOUS EVENTS
The planned signing of a new union treaty
(i)
MAIN EVENTS
CONSEQUENCES
ACTS
Yanayev assumed Presidential power; state powers transferred to the Committee
(c) (e) (g)
SPEECH ACTS
Declaration of the state of emergency
(b) (e)
SCENE
HAPPENINGS
SETTING
CIRCUMSTANCES
On vacation
(d)
PLACE
The Black Sea
(d)
PARTICIPANTS/ ACTORS
Gorbachev, Committee
(c) (d) (e) (h)
REASONS (ALLEGED)
Gorbachev is unable to fulfill his duties for reasons of health; The country is in mortal danger from extremist forces.
(c) (f)
RESULTS
Gorbachev has been replaced, no details about his conditions
(a) (d)
REACTIONS
US officials called this situation serious
(j)

FIGURE 2 The thematic structure of the news episode as described by the VOA
Letters between paranthesis refer to themes listed in Table 3

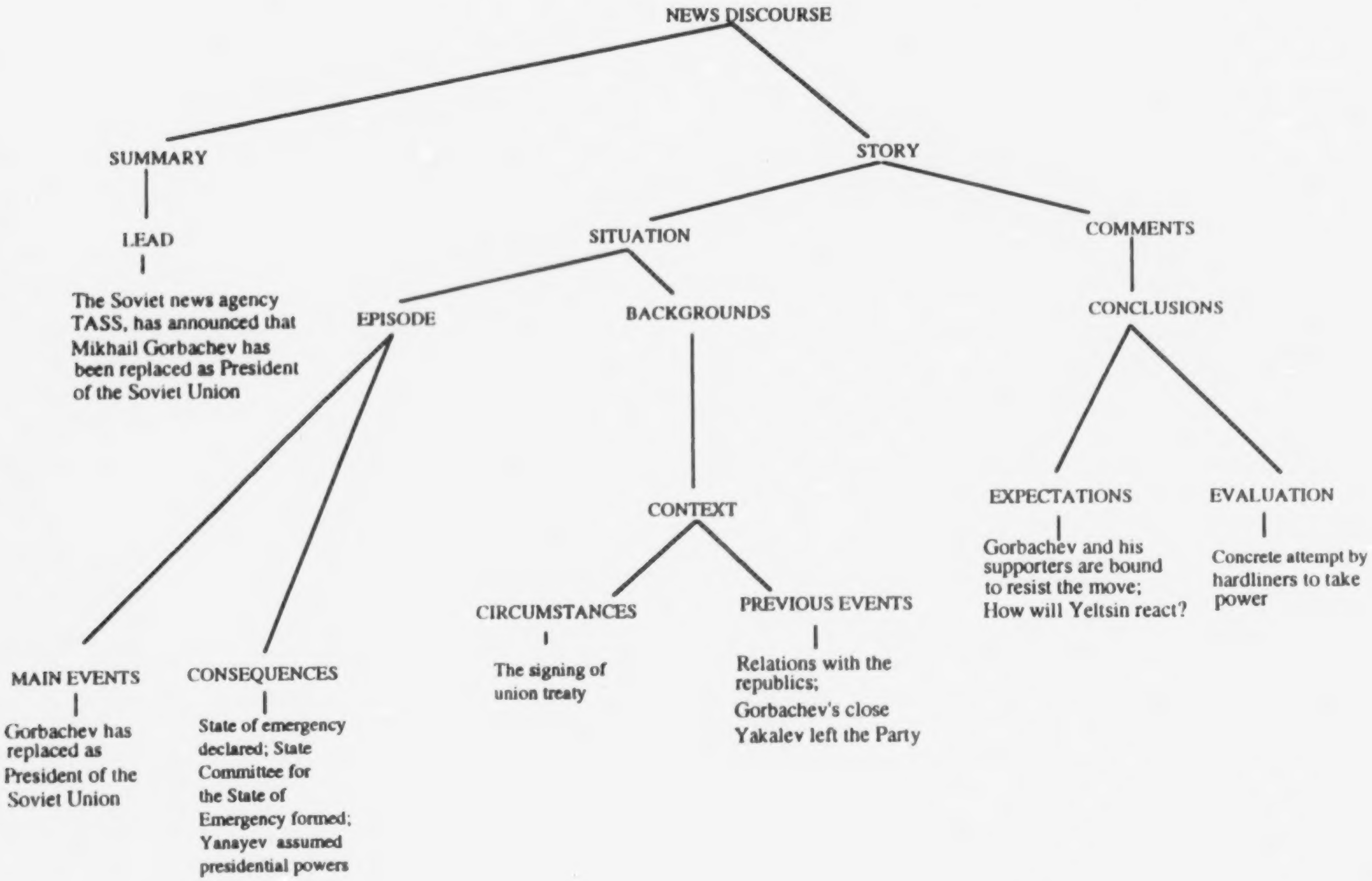
NEWS DISCOURSE
SUMMARY
STORY
LEAD
The Soviet news agency TASS, has announced that Mikhail Gorbachev has been replaced as President of the Soviet Union
SITUATION
COMMENTS
EPISODE
BACKGROUNDS
CONCLUSIONS
CONTEXT
EXPECTATIONS
EVALUATION
Gorbachev and his supporters are bound to resist the move; How will Yeltsin react?
Concrete attempt by hardliners to take power
CIRCUMSTANCES
PREVIOUS EVENTS
The signing of union treaty
Relations with the republics;
Gorbachev's close Yakalev left the Party
MAIN EVENTS
CONSEQUENCES
Gorbachev has replaced as President of the Soviet Union
State of emergency declared; State Committee for the State of Emergency formed; Yanayev assumed presidential powers

FIGURE 3 The superstructure schema for news report (the *BBC World Service)*

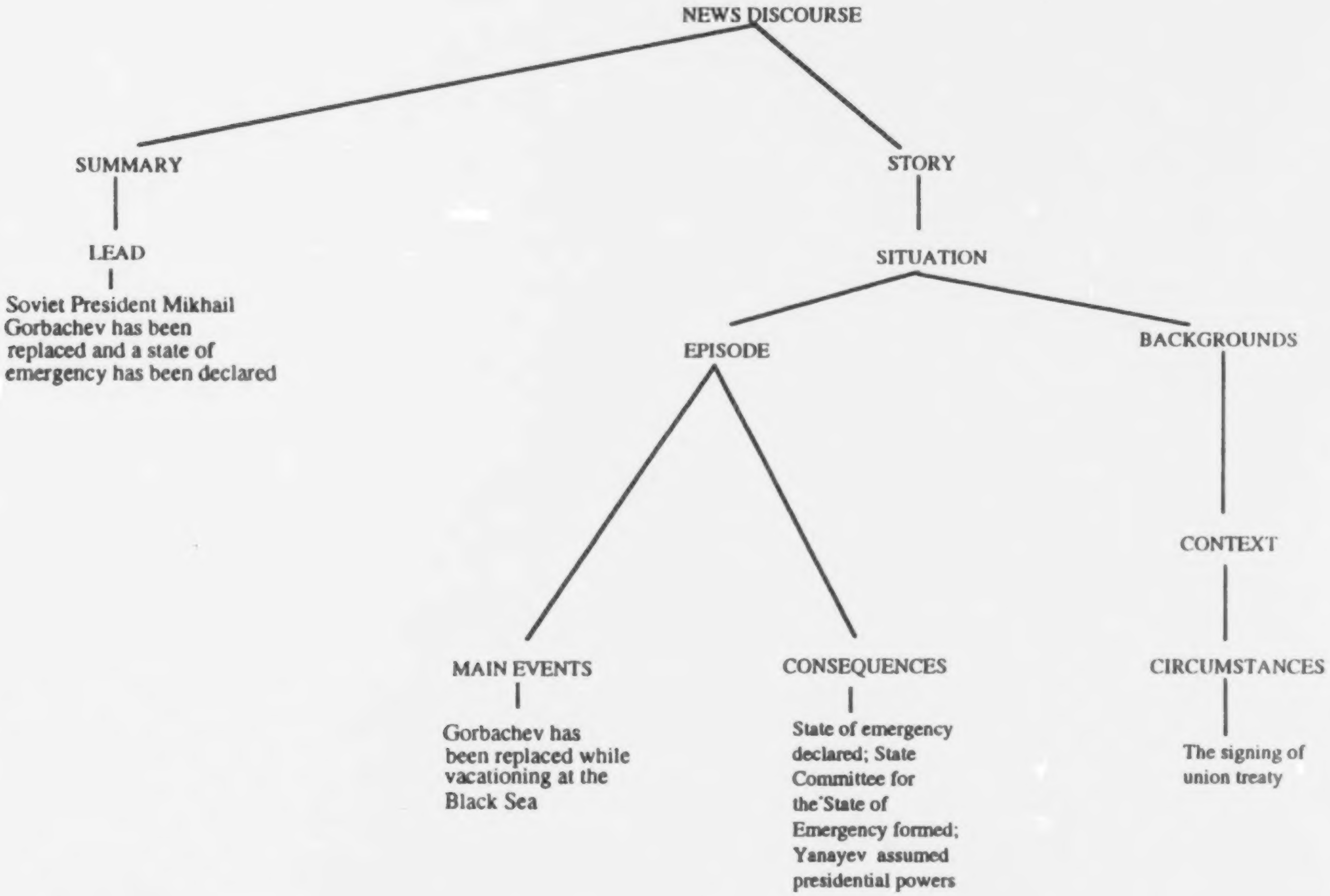
NEWS DISCOURSE
SUMMARY
STORY
LEAD
Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev has been replaced and a state of emergency has been declared
SITUATION
EPISODE
BACKGROUNDS
CONTEXT
MAIN EVENTS
CONSEQUENCES
CIRCUMSTANCES
Gorbachev has been replaced while vacationing at the Black Sea
State of emergency declared; State Committee for the State of Emergency formed; Yanayev assumed presidential powers
The signing of union treaty

FIGURE 4 The superstructure schema for news report (the VOA)

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Media Agenda Setting and the United States Supreme Court's Civil Liberties Docket, 1981-1990

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INTRODUCTION

Although today's headlines remind us of the critical role that the U.S. Supreme Court plays in issues as fundamental as voting rights, law enforcement and the powers of Congress and the president, little academic attention has been given to the possible role that the mass media play in getting those issues onto the Court's docket. As an institution that must address changing social forces, the Court is exposed to a variety of external stimuli as it chooses which cases to accept. And one must assume that the discretion of granting and denying appeals—called writs of certiorari—is not exercised arbitrarily; otherwise the Court could not maintain the support of the Bench, the Bar, political leaders, and other publics so essential to its effectiveness in the American political system.

Although it lacks any formal connection to the electorate, the Court's role as policy maker creates a responsibility for knowing about issues important to Americans. Chief Justice William Rehnquist (1986) concluded that a judge cannot "hermetically seal himself off from all manifestations of public opinion" and during her recent confirmation hearings Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg testified that she would not steer the court beyond prevailing public sentiment (Biskupic, 1993). If we propose that the Court does not act arbitrarily, then what are the forces that lead it to grant appeals? If the Court is a responsive institution, as asserted by political scientists and legal scholars, it most likely composes a docket in response to forces like public opinion and, as a conveyor of public opinion and attitudes, the mass media.

As the first dual examination of the Court's caseload and the media's agenda, this study proposes that the mass media is one of the forces the Justices listen to when assembling the Court's docket. Past research has concentrated on "after the fact" coverage—analyzing and categorizing which Court decisions receive press attention during each term. This paper, however, examines media coverage before a case reaches the steps of the Supreme Court. To accomplish this, the agenda-setting framework is used to link the media's coverage of civil liberties issues with the appearance of corresponding cases on the Court's docket. In short, the study examines issues on which the media and the Court converge—and those issues on which the two institutions diverge.

Creating the Court's Agenda

The Court did not always have broad discretionary power to set its own agenda. To combat the Court's growing docket Congress passed the Judiciary Act of 1935, replacing mandatory review of all appeals with discretionary review—called writs of certiorari (O'Brien, 1991, p. 184). The Act succinctly states the Court's goal: to hear important cases. For the first time, the Court was able to pick and choose the arguments it wanted to hear—and a new era of academic research slowly began.

In 1964 Joseph Tanenhaus proposed a "cue theory" to explain how the Justices decided to review an appeal. The theory suggests that they use characteristics, such as dissension in lower courts, as cues which help identify important cases. Cue theory was widely accepted by the legal and academic community as evidence that the highest court in the land was open to influence (Perry, 1992, p. 114). Most importantly, it presented the Court as an institution responsive to external forces, laying the groundwork for future studies on the influence of public opinion and, now, the role of the mass media.

The Role of the Media

One special feature of the U.S. Supreme Court is its focus on individual human beings. Congress debates large bills that have to be written in general terms, not referring to any particular citizen. By contrast, the Court under the Constitution can only consider cases involving the real interest of particular individuals (Lewis, 1966, p. 176). Its role as guardian of civil liberties receives extensive coverage from the media (O'Callaghan & Dukes, 1992; Solimine, 1980; Ericson, 1977) and Americans most often cite cases involving individual rights when queried by pollsters on recent Court decisions (Caldeira, 1992, p. 303).

The mass media provide the Court with information by reporting on issues and disseminating public attitudes through survey results and general news coverage. The media serve as public reviewers of the Court's work. The Court is monitored by a large press corps which serves most Americans as their first, and sometimes only, source of information on judicial decisions.

Also, the media are one of the Court's primary sources on the views of other policy makers and elite opinion leaders. For this reason, the lawyer defending an illegal alien in *Immigration and Naturalization Service v. Chadha* (1983) became upset when the *Washington Post* refused to publish his response to an article that was unfavorable to his client's position. The lawyer saw the article as potentially damaging because the Justices read the *Post* (Craig, 1988, p. 223).

The Opinion Environment

Much of the Court's work involves obscure legal issues on which few people have opinions. However, other decisions concern such salient issues as crime and civil rights—issues on which much of the public holds strong views. Some decisions are highly visible and controversial. About half the respondents to a 1989 survey reported that they followed the Court's recent decisions on abortion and flag burning "very closely," making these two of the top ten news stories over a three-year period in the *Los Angeles Times* (Rosenstiel, 1989).

Although it is uncertain how much public opinion influences the Court's decisions, the Justices sometimes take particular positions because they know of public attitudes on an issue and want to align themselves or the Court with the public. In the majority opinion of *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey* (1992) the Justices made a conscious reference to public opinion and "the terrible price" the Court would pay if it overturned the 19-year-old precedent of *Roe v. Wade* (1973). In recent years, amid growing public concern about illegal drugs and urban crime, the Court has willingly approved a range of government actions from employee drug testing (*Skinner v. Railway Labor*

Executives Association, 1989) to loosening search and seizure restrictions under the Fourth Amendment (*Florida v. Bostick*, 1991).

We also know that the Court adopts highly unpopular policies. For instance, decisions in the 1960s prohibiting organized prayer in public schools and promoting student busing for racial desegregation were supported by a relatively small minority of the public. More recently, when the Court struck down Texas' anti-flag-burning law (*Texas v. Johnson*, 1989), the decision aroused strong public disapproval, with polls showing a three-to-one majority opposing the Court's action (Baum, 1992, p. 137). But a year later in *United States v. Eichman* (1990) the same 5-4 majority defiantly struck down a law passed by Congress which prohibited flag burning.

The Court and Academic Research

Academic research also reveals an alternately defiant and placating Court. An early study of public opinion and the Court reported that its civil rights and national security decisions reflected public opinion more closely than its criminal rights decisions; even so, in all three areas Court decisions sometimes deviated from majority sentiment (Casper, 1972). However, later research (Page & Shapiro, 1983; Barnum, 1985; Marshall, 1988) compared public opinion data to public policy issues and concluded that Court decisions have usually, if not unfailingly, reflected poll majorities or at least have followed discernible poll trends.

Most research on public opinion and judicial decision making suggests that the Justices' decisions generally reflect public opinion—especially when public opinion itself is clearly expressed, one-sided and intense (Marshall, 1988). Reviewing the studies above, it's clear that the Court is aware of and often influenced by public opinion. What's not clear is how the Court receives the information it uses to gauge the opinion environment and make its decisions. A missing variable in these studies is the mass media.

THEORY

Through attention to civil liberties issues and as a conveyor of public opinion, it is hypothesized that the media should be included among stimuli that set the agenda for the Court's docket. The original agenda-setting hypothesis examined the emphasis placed on campaign issues by the mass media (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The study matched the salience of voter's attitudes toward political issues with the actual content of media coverage and concluded that voters tended to "share the media's *composite* definition of what is important" (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p. 184). For this research, the agenda-setting framework is used to link the media's coverage of civil liberties issues with the appearance of corresponding cases on the Court's docket. The study examines issues on which the media and the court converge—and those issues on which the two institutions diverge. Although this preliminary research might not uncover an agenda-setting effect, it will reveal how the Court views civil liberties issues and juxtapose these findings against the media's agenda. Finally, the results will lay the groundwork for more detailed explorations by communication theorists in the future.

Hypothesis

The mass media set the civil liberties agenda of the U.S. Supreme Court's docket each session.

Theoretical Definitions

Mass Media Agenda:

The mass media cannot cover every issue for a variety of reasons, time constraints, limited news space or staff and publication costs, to name a few. But by selecting issues to cover, the mass media create an agenda. These selected issues represent what they think is newsworthy and important to their audiences. Through this agenda, the press tells media consumers what to think about.

U.S. Supreme Court Docket:

Each term, the Justices vote on a list of cases to hear. This list, called a docket, is not only a scheduling calendar, but also represents issues that the Justices deem worthy of their time and attention. These are the cases they've agreed to review and possibly reverse. For this study, only cases given full, or plenary, review are considered. Petitioners for these cases are given the opportunity to argue before the Justices, after which they receive a written and signed opinion from the Justices.

Civil Liberties:

Legal scholars place three types of rights in the category of civil liberties:

> (1) the rights of disadvantaged groups to equal treatment;
>
> (2) certain substantive rights guaranteed by the First Amendment, including such rights as freedom of expression and freedom of religion; and
>
> (3) procedural rights of criminal defendants and other people in governmental proceedings. (Baum, 1992, p. 176).

Only cases dealing with the rights of disadvantaged groups and First Amendment freedoms were scrutinized in this study.

The procedural rights of criminal defendants were excluded for several reasons. First, *U.S. Law Week* places all criminal cases into one category regardless of subject matter. For instance, death penalty cases were lumped into the same group as due process grievances. Second, one-third of the docket is consumed by criminal justice issues, making the criminal docket a large and rather difficult sample to analyze over a ten-year period. Finally, there are several highly attentive audiences which wait for the Court to address issues of criminal law. This audience includes not only judges of the criminal justice system, but also law enforcement agencies at the state and federal level, attorneys general, defense lawyers and prosecutors (Baum, 1992, p. 109).

METHOD

This study began with the purpose of examining the media's agenda and the acceptance or denial of writs of certiorari filed with the Supreme Court. However, because the Court receives more than 5,000 writs a year, it releases a summary containing only the name of litigating parties, docket number, a short paragraph stating that the writ was denied and the date of denial.

Since a description of all cases filed at the Court was not available, it was clear the study could only explore a possible connection between media coverage and issues accepted for oral argument on the Court's docket. The granting of plenary review is a strong indicator of the Court's attention to national problems because the oral argument and resulting opinions represent the Court's allocation of its scarcest resource—time and attention. The first task was locating a reliable, consistent summary of each term's caseload to represent the Court's agenda.

The Supreme Court's Agenda

U.S. Law Week's Supreme Court Review was selected as the data source on the Court's civil liberties agenda. The *Review* is released each January, a full six months after the term concludes, and is able to present a thorough and complete interpretation of all cases given plenary review.

The *Review* divides the Court's docket into four categories: individual rights, labor and employment discrimination law, business law and criminal law and procedure. Cases are further divided into descriptive sub-headings, such as "Obscenity" and "Fair Housing." These categories and sub-headings are consistently applied, leaving little room for inaccurate interpretation by the reader. The case summaries include general background information on the litigating parties, any constitutional questions considered by the court, a synopsis of the majority and dissenting opinions and historical information relevant to the issues addressed in the petition.

A 10-year span was chosen for three reasons. First, *U.S. Law Week's Supreme Court Review* began publishing in 1981, with the 1990-91 term being the most recent summary available. Second, William Rehnquist's elevation to Chief Justice began with the 1986 term. This creates two five-year "courts": Rehnquist's, 1986-1990, and Burger's, 1981-1985. Third, because only the civil liberties docket is under evaluation, a shorter time span did not yield enough cases for consideration.

Media Coverage: Part I

After compiling a list of all topics, corresponding case names and year for each civil liberties case from 1981 to 1990, a search of Supreme Court coverage in the *New York Times* was conducted using NEXIS. Actual case names mentioned in the *Times'* "Supreme Court Roundup" were first scrutinized.

The Roundup appears from October to July. During the early months of the term, it carries information on oral arguments made before the Court and the outcome of cases seeking plenary review. Some cases receive a headline and several paragraphs of coverage, while others are simply squeezed into brief, two- or three-sentence summaries. The fate of New York's local or state cases are not provided in the Roundup, making it an ideal barometer of national issues brought before the Court.

To ensure that every case was thoroughly tracked, first the case name, i.e. *Jones v. Smith*, was used to search the Roundup. For NEXIS, the keywords were "JONES V. SMITH AND ROUNDUP, 10/01/89 THROUGH 7/30/90." Only stories carrying both "Jones v. Smith" and "Roundup" were selected by the computer.

After locating the case, placement within the article was noted and a tally of coverage created. The cases were then divided into high and low news coverage categories. There was little difficulty placing the cases into two groups, as most coverage seemed to naturally divide into either high and low sets.

A case met the criteria for the high category if it was used as a lead story and received a headline in the Roundup. In the low category were cases receiving one

Roundup mention, usually a paragraph at the bottom of the article or in a passing reference to daily events at the Court.

Media Coverage: Part II

After completing the first part of the media analysis, a list of highly covered cases was compiled. This list was used to search the *Readers Guide to Periodical Literature*, so the case name was replaced with topic or issue keywords. For instance, *Plyer v. Doe* (1982) was a decision forcing Texas to admit undocumented school-age children into public schools. In the first part of the study, *Plyer v. Doe* was the keyword. In the second part the case name was replaced with a category name, in this case "Alien Schoolchildren." At this point, the case summary provided by *U.S. Law Week* was essential. No analysis or interpretation of judicial opinions was conducted on the part of the researcher as category names were taken from the sub-headings selected by *U.S. Law Week*.

Because cases often addressed several issues or involved numerous litigants, the *Readers Guide* was thoroughly searched for applicable articles. For instance, the *U.S. Law Week* (1981-82, p. 21) sub-heading for *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People v. Claibome Hardware Co.* (1982) was "Civil Rights Boycott." The case involved a seven-year boycott of white-owned businesses in a small Mississippi town that eventually a hardware store. When searching for preceding news coverage several issues were used, including "NAACP," "Civil Rights Demonstrations," "Mississippi" and "Race Discrimination." In contrast, some issues, such as abortion, were quickly located and did not require further investigation using other topic names.

Before conducting further analysis of media coverage, it was necessary to find the day the writ of certiorari was accepted. *U.S. Law Week* publishes an annual guide on the U.S. Supreme Court's docket in its *Lawyer's Edition*. This *Supplemental Guide to the U.S. Supreme Court* is a concise calendar history of each appeal. It lists case name, docket number, date of application, acceptance or denial, date of oral argument and date the decision was released.

The list of issues compiled from the sub-headings was used to observe coverage in two weekly newsmagazines, *Time* and *Newsweek*. These magazines were analyzed by counting the number of articles appearing in each publication during the year prior to the date the writ was accepted.

Weekly newsmagazines have often been used as surrogates for the national media. Funkhouser (1973) suggested that although newsmagazines are not cited as primary sources of information by most people, their coverage reflects the nationwide content of the prominent news media—television and newspapers. Kadushin, et al., (1971) concluded that the "intellectual elite" and policy making practitioners of the nation are influenced by a few select newsmagazines, including *Time* and *Newsweek*.

Past research on *New York Times'* coverage found the newspaper to possess a more detailed view of the Court's work. When O'Callaghan and Dukes (1992) examined the coverage of the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times* and *Chicago Tribune*, they discovered that the other two newspapers ran only 55% of the total New York Times coverage. Ericson's 1977 study comparing the number of story lines in the *New York Times*, *Ann Arbor News* and *Detroit News* showed the *Times* produced 8,510 lines, while the other papers' coverage never exceeded 2400 lines.

To summarize the above steps:

- A list was compiled of highly covered cases from the *New York Times'* Supreme Court column;
- The date the writ was accepted was added to the list; and
- Case names were replaced with an appropriate subject matter label and the issue was searched in the *Readers' Guide* for coverage in *Time* and *Newsweek* one year prior to the case's acceptance by the Court.

Deciding to Decide: The Selection Process

> How does a case get chosen? Serendipity.
> —*U.S. Supreme Court Clerk* (Perry, 1992, p. 1)

"I'll take my case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court!" is the battle cry of disgruntled litigants across the country. Easier said than done, however, since each year more than 5,000 parties make their plea for a spot on the Court's docket, and less than 5 percent receive full consideration with a written opinion (O'Brien, 1991, p. 191). Because the Court's nine-month schedule allows for no more than 160 oral arguments, there is "an institutionalized inertia not to take a case" (Perry, 1992, p. 218).

The Court's Schedule

Supreme Court terms begin the first Monday in October and end in late June or early July. Applications from petitioners seeking plenary review arrive throughout the year. Those received during the Court's summer vacation stockpile until the Justices' return in late September. The week before the October term, the Chief Justice holds a two-day conference to decide the judicial fate of these cases.

Writs of Certiorari

Certiorari is Latin for "to be informed of" (Black's Law Dictionary, 1979). Granting a writ of certiorari in response to a petition, called "granting cert.," is the most common way cases come before the Supreme Court. Within 60 days after a final judgment is entered in a lower court, the losing party may continue litigation by submitting a petition for certiorari to the U.S. Supreme Court. This party is called the petitioner. The opposing party, or respondent, has 30 days after receipt of the petition to file its own "brief in opposition." Both the original petition and brief in opposition must not exceed 30 pages (Perry, 1992, p. 40).

Friday is conference day. The morning is spent discussing cases presented during the Monday and Wednesday oral argument sessions, while the afternoon is reserved for dispensing with requests for certiorari. The Justices, in order of seniority, give their comments on each case and announce their vote. If a case receives four votes it is granted cert. (Wasby, 1978, pp. 159-160). For those granted cert. the Court may provide plenary review, which includes oral arguments and a written opinion. Or it may give the case summary review, handing down a decision without oral argument in the form of a brief, unsigned opinion. About one-third of the cases accepted by the Court are given summary review (Baum, 1992, p. 97). The civil liberties cases receiving plenary review are the writs under scrutiny for this study.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents a numerical history of the U.S. Supreme Court's civil liberties caseload from 1981 to 1990. The table incorporates results from the first part of the media study with data from *Harvard Law Review's* statistical summary of each term. The civil liberties docket accounts for an average of 14% of the Court's plenary review workload. As the Rehnquist Court decreased the number of full opinions written each year, it appears the number of civil liberties appeals were adjusted to accommodate the smaller docket. However, the percentage of the docket devoted to these issues remained fairly consistent throughout the Burger and Rehnquist courts.

Media coverage was tracked against the changing agenda of the Court in Figure 1 by plotting the number of highly covered cases in the Roundup against the civil liberties docket. At this point, further analysis of cases receiving low Roundup coverage ended. Almost all of these cases involved procedural issues, such as official immunity, attorney fee calculation, excessive court fines and municipal liability.

Table 2 provides a view of 21 issues appearing more than once before the court during the 10-year study. This table, created from the first part of the media analysis, also serves as a flow chart of cases on the docket and issue coverage in the Roundup. For instance, the table shows that this issue of child custody/support was on the Court's docket four times during the ten-year study.

Table 1: Civil liberties caseload of the U.S. Supreme Court and media coverage in the *New York Times'* "Roundup," 1981-1990

	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
Total cases	167	167	162	151	159	152	142	143	139	120
Civil liberties cases	19	20	21	25	26	21	21	22	17	17
Civil liberties cases receiving high coverage	11	10	11	9	12	12	9	11	12	8
Civil liberties cases receiving low coverage	8	10	10	16	14	9	12	11	5	9

Figure 1: U.S. Supreme Court civil liberties caseload, 1981-1990, compared to cases receving high media coverage

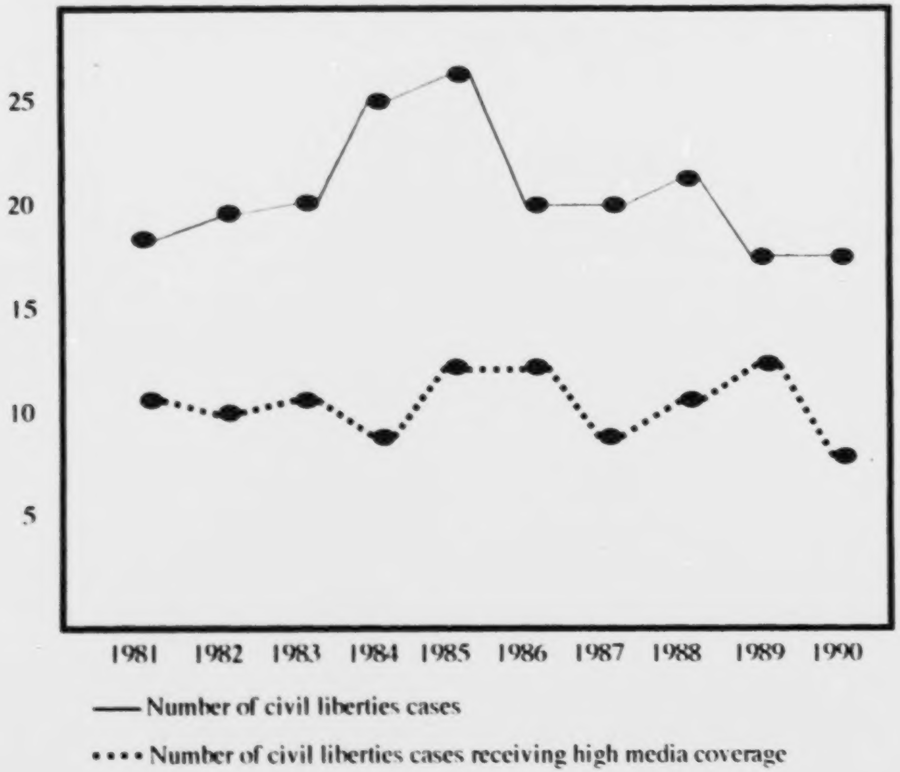

Table 2: Civil liberties cases on the U.S. Supreme Court docket, 1981-1990, and case coverage in the *New York Times'* "Roundup"

	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
Abortion		H			H			H	H	H
Attorney's Fees		H		L	H	L		H	L	L
Busing	L						H		H	
Campaign Funding/Election Law	L	H	L	H	H	H		L	H	
Child Custody/Support	H	H	L				L	H		
Desegregated Housing	H								H	
Draft Registration			H	H						
Education for the Handicapped	H		H	H			L	L		
Flag Burning								H	H	
Freedom of Information Act	H							H		
Freedom of Religion		H	H		L	H	H	H	H	
Freedom of Speech		H				H	L	H		H
Immigration/Alien Rights	H	L	H			L				
Media Law/Libel			H	L		H	H	H	H	H
Public School and Religion	H			H	H	H			H	
Race Discrimination	H	H	H	H		H				H
Right to Die					H				H	
Rights of Mentally Handicapped	H			H						
Sex Discrimination	H		H			H	H		L	
Sex-Oriented Business Regulation								H		H
Voting Rights Act	H	H			H	L				H

H = High coverage in the "Roundup"
L = Low coverage in the "Roundup"

After identifying case issues in the high category from Table 2, articles in *Time* and *Newsweek* were tallied. Results from this phase of the media study are shown in Table 3. Using child custody/support again, Table 3 shows that this issue was the subject of pre-docket coverage prior to the 1981 and 1988 terms.

Next, Table 4 was created to evaluate the consistency of media coverage. This repetition in appearance on the docket and in the media is labeled "Issue Consistency." For instance, every abortion case was preceded by coverage—100% consistency. But education for the handicapped was not on the media's agenda prior to an appeal being granted.

Table 4 is also the culmination of results from both parts of the media study. Issues identified with a "C"—meaning "Covered"—were those placed in the "high" category from Roundup columns. The cases represented by these issues were also preceded by coverage in *Time* and *Newsweek*. For example, a year before each draft registration case, stories appeared on the controversy of mandatory registration for college males seeking federal financial aid.

"X" represents years when the Court accepted an appeal without prior press coverage. For instance, the first flag burning case in 1988 received an "X" because it was not preceded by any coverage. However, before the next year's flag burning case was granted several articles ran in the two magazines and is therefore identified with a "C."

Issue Consistency

Table 4 shows that almost one-third of the Court's docket was covered by the press prior to a granted appeal. The issues included: Abortion; Rights of the Mentally Handicapped; Right to Die; Draft Registration; Desegregated Housing; and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). With the exception of Abortion, each topic appeared twice between 1981 and 1990. However, the span of years varied, ranging from the back-to-back draft registration cases to seven years between the desegregated housing lawsuits.

Table 3: Number of stories appearing in *Newsweek* and *Time* 12 months prior to the date a writ was granted by the U.S. Supreme Court

	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	Total
Abortion		7			14		0	11	13	21	66
Attorney's Fees					0			1			1
Busing							5		0		5
Campaign Finance/Election Law		14		5	0				4		23
Child Custody/Support	4	0						4			8
Desegregated Housing	1								7		8
Draft Registration			3	1							4
Education for the Handicapped	0		1								1
Flag Burning								0	5		5
Freedom of Information Act	6							1			7
Freedom of Religion		0	1			4		0	0		5
Freedom of Speech		1				0		2	5		8
Immigration/Alien Rights	3		4								4
Media Law/Libel			0			2	0	0	0	0	2
Public School and Religion	0			5	7	1			0		13
Race Discrimination	0	7	2			0				2	11
Right to Die					1				4		5
Rights of Mentally Handicapped	2			1							3
Sex Discrimination	0		5			0	4				9
Sex-Oriented Business Regulation								2		0	2
Voting Rights Act	6	5			0					1	12
TOTAL	22	33	16	12	22	7	9	19	33	24	

Table 4: Issue consistency of civil liberties cases on the U.S. Supreme Court's docket, 1981-1990, and the media's agenda

	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	% Covered
Abortion		C			C		C	C	C	C	100%
Attorney's Fees		X		X	X	X		C	X	X	14
Busing							C		X		50
Campaign Funding/Election Law	X	C		C	X	X			C		50
Child Custody/Support	C	X	X				C	C			60
Desegregated Housing	C								C		100
Draft Registration			C	C							100
Education for the Handicapped	X		C	X							33
Flag Burning								X	C		50
Freedom of Information Act	C							C			100
Freedom of Religion		X	C			C	C	C	X		30
Freedom of Speech		C				X		C		X	50
Immigration/Alien Rights	C	X	C								66
Media Law/Libel			X			C	X	X	X	X	17
Public School and Religion	X			C	C	C			X		60 .
Race Discrimination	X	C	C		X	X				C	44
Right to Die					C				C		100
Rights of Mentally Handicapped	C			C							100
Sex Discrimination			C			X	C		X		50
Sex-Oriented Business Regulation								C		X	50
Voting Rights Act	C	C			X	X				C	60 %

C = Issue covered preceding year writ was granted
X = Issue was not covered preceding year writ was granted

In contrast, cases appearing on the docket most frequently were the least likely to receive coverage prior to its appearance on the docket. These included Education for the Handicapped; Attorneys' Fees; Media Law/Libel; and Freedom of Religion. Each appeared five times or more during the study, with the least coverage given to Attorneys' Fees and Media Law/Libel disputes.

Four areas of civil liberties received coverage from the media a majority of the time (60-75%) before appearing on the docket. They were: Religion in Public Schools; Voting Rights Act; Immigration/Alien Rights; and Child Custody/Support. Interestingly, all four issues were given plenary review five times during the 10-year study, but received prior issue coverage only three of those years.

A majority of the 21 issues listed in Table 4 fell at or below the 50% mark. There seems to be no connection between the number of times these issues appeared and the amount of media attention given to them. Five issues had pre-writ coverage at least half the time they appeared before the Court: Busing; Flag Burning; Freedom of Speech; Sex-oriented Business Regulation; and Sex Discrimination. Most of these issues were on the docket only twice.

Coverage Typology

At this point, the number of articles appearing in *Newsweek* and *Time* were utilized again (Table 3). The total number of articles for each civil liberties issue was tallied and divided by the number of years the issue appeared on the docket. This became the level of average coverage. For instance, there were only five Right to Die articles during the 10-year study, but the issue was on the docket twice, making the average 2.5.

Next, a typology was created using the number of years the issue appeared on the docket and the issues average coverage. Issues appearing two or three years were placed in the low category; four, five or six years is high. An average of 2.5 or below is low, while 3.0 or above placed the issue in the high category.

This typology identifies issues on which the Court's docket converge with the media's agenda. Table 5 shows that five issues were high in both the number of

Table 5: A comparison of the media's agenda and the number of years an issue appears on the U.S. Supreme Court's Docket

	Coverage Typology	
	Number of Articles	
	Low Median ≤ 2.5	High Median ≥ 3
Years on Docket		
Low 2-3	Attorney's Fees Busing Draft Registration Education for the Handicapped Flag Burning Rights of Mentally Handicapped Sex-Oriented Business Regulation	Desegregated Housing Freedom of Information Immigration/Alien Rights Sex Discrimination
High 4-5-6	Freedom of Religion Freedom of Speech Media Law/ Libel Public School and Religion Race Discrimination Right to Die	Abortion Campaign Finance/ Election Law Child Custody/Support Voting Rights Act

years and the number of articles; Abortion; Campaign Funding/ Election Law; Child Custody/Support; Right to Die; and Voting Rights. Also, seven issues were low in the number of articles and years on the Court's docket. Looking at the typology from this angle creates a congruence of 12 issues between the press and the Court.

Looking at the typology from another angle, the issues on which the media and the Court are incongruent is striking. Of the five issues placed on the docket four to six times during the ten-year study, three are issues that one might expect the media to have covered extensively: Freedom of Religion, Freedom of Speech and Media Law/Libel. The remaining two, Religion in Public Schools and Race Discrimination, also received little attention from the media prior to their acceptance on the docket.

Further, these five issues could be considered staples of civil liberties and individual rights litigation. Freedom of religion and speech have been the cornerstones of much constitutional debate, while religion in public schools and race discrimination might also be seen as controversial disputes. It is perhaps this controversial nature that cause the media to look for cues from the Court. Also, in the area of religion and race discrimination, the media might use the Court as a filter to identify important issues surrounding these two civil liberties.

DISCUSSION

Do the mass media set the civil liberties agenda for the U.S. Supreme Court? Although the media's agenda competes for the Court's attention with other institutional and social forces, results indicate that they are capable of influencing the appearance of some issues on the Court's docket. Data from this preliminary study show that the hypothesis warrants further examination and, like Tanenhaus' (1964) cue theory nearly three decades ago, can lead the way to future, more complex analysis of the Justices and their work. The research suggests that it's quite possible the media are prominent pieces in the puzzle of judicial decision making.

This study attempted to connect the media's agenda to the Court's docket because previous research overlooks or avoids linking the two institutions. Some (Marshall, 1989; Caldeira, 1991) suggest that the Court intentionally ignores the media's agenda or other public indices to avoid the appearance of manipulation. But after examining the results of this study, it's possible to think that the Court does accept the media's agenda as an accurate indicator of public opinion or growing concerns about national problems.

Conclusions on the Media and the Court

Tables 5 and 6 indicate the extent to which the mass media's agenda is congruent with the Court's docket. Table 5 lists 16 out of 21 issues covered by the media at least half of the time before an appeal was granted. Six of those issues received pre-writ coverage each and every time they appeared on the docket. Finally, Table 5 shows that the Court's docket and the media's agenda converge on 12 issues—a congruence of 60% of the civil liberties cases brought before the Court.

Clearly, public concurrence sets an "outer boundary" for judicial decisions. This seemed to be Justice Frankfurter's concern when he said, "The Court's authority—possessed of neither the purse nor sword—ultimately rests on sustained public confidence in its moral sanction" (*Baker v. Carr*, 1963). Because the Court is virtually powerless without public support, this study identified the media as one channel through which the Court might evaluate and gauge the issues it must resolve to maintain its authority.

The media's agenda is competing with other powers of influence. For instance, members of the Court also receive letters. While considering an abortion case in 1988, according to Justice Kennedy, letters were "coming in, by the baleful" (Riskind, 1990). Law reviews have another kind of impact, as they constitute another source of information that enters into decisions. Indeed, the authors of one 1989 article said it was written solely to influence Sandra Day O'Connor (Estrich & Sullivan, 1989).

Of course, a justice may take cues and information from a wide range of individuals and groups. Undoubtedly, some justices are influenced by friends and acquaintances—whether or not they are attorneys. Justice Harry Blackmun served as counsel for the Mayo Clinic earlier in his career and has drawn from medical scholars for some of his opinions (Baum, 1992, p. 140) and Justice Tom Clark once telephoned J. Edgar Hoover to ask for information relevant to a case (Schwartz, 1983, p. 311).

Limitations

As the first study to use media agenda setting in the context of judicial review, there were numerous limitations and obstacles accompanying this inaugural research. Most obvious was the absence of previous efforts to pave the way—there was no road map and little information about possible short cuts. Another obstacle was the lack of data on writs denied plenary review by the Court and those given summary review. This missing information limited the study and prevented the research from capturing the full scope of issues presented to the Justices each term. Consequently, only issues receiving plenary review were available for scrutiny, giving the author a partial and imperfect view of the Court's workload.

Future Research

Future research should incorporate coverage from electronic media—an area that has never been explored. While numerous studies exist on print media (Newland, 1964; Grey; 1968; Ericson, 1977; Solimine, 1980; O'Callaghan & Dukes, 1992), there is no record of broadcast journalism's coverage of the Court and its work. Maybe the Court, like this year's Presidential candidates, are reaching beyond the conventional press corps. Perhaps they're following the lead of Justice Blackmun, who told an audience that he and his wife travel the country to talk with average Americans and to understand the mood of the nation (Blackmun, 1992).

Eventually, the Court must respond to societal demands and changes—that much we know. But everything about the Court militates against quick shifts in policy or agenda. Judge-made choices are incremental and due to the various tiers in the judicial system, cases need long periods of time in order to percolate up to the Supreme Court. We should continue to consider if the media, perhaps coupled with another external force, pushes certain issues to the top tier.

Political scientist Caldeira (1991, p. 326) concluded that "research on public opinion and American courts should humble even the most bullish of students." However, these results on the media and the U.S. Supreme Court presented here in the context of agenda setting should raise the spirits of Caldeira and his colleagues. And there are pleasant flipsides in trying to connect a theoretical link between the U.S. Supreme Court and the mass media—most importantly, the field is wide open and waiting for further exploration. Unlike other well-developed areas, where students must concoct esoteric designs or launch massive statistical strikes in order to make significant progress, the relationship between the Court and the mass media has relatively unmuddied waters.

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Abstract　　　　Mass Communication and Society

Religion and Trust in News from the Mass Media

by

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Because relatively successful single-issue mobilization efforts by the religious right are both widely known and well-documented, the simultaneous appearance of two full-page newspaper ads during late February 1993 decrying television entertainment and news raises questions about the links between religion and trust in news from the mass media.

Therefore, this study uses data from October 1992 telephone interviews with a random sample of 987 Middletown (Muncie, Indiana) residents conducted to examine the relationship between religion and trust in radio, television, newspapers and magazines news. The 10 religion measures used in the study tap four dimensions of religiosity: salience, orientation, behavior, and beliefs.

Results indicate that there is a relationship between religion and media trust, but the relationship is neither strong nor clear. The religion measures explain only about 5 percent of the variance in trust in television; demographics explain another 5 percent. The the religion and demographic measures are even less able to explain trust in radio, newspapers and magazines.

Neither the importance people attach to their religion nor their activity in the institutional church appeared to have much bearing on whether or not people trust the media. While the measures work somewhat differently for each of the four media, the relationship between trust in the media and private devotional activity, being a traditionalist on religious matters, and holding orthodox Christian beliefs support the hypothesis that conservative Christians are less likely to trust the mass media than are more liberal Christians, non-Christians or those with no religious affiliation. Those who read religious publications are less likely than others to trust television news; those who watch religious television are less likely to trust print media.

Although the numbers are small, pockets of high distrust in several large fundamentalist and evangelical congregations, several denominations, and among fans of Pat Robertson and the 700 Club, Focus on the Family, and the Catholic diocesan newspaper suggest that tapping into these existing faith communities raises the possibility of successful mobilization efforts against the mass media.

Religion and Trust in News from the Mass Media

by

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Paper submitted to the Mass Communication and Society Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication national convention, Kansas City, Missouri, August 1993.

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Religion and Trust in News from the Mass Media

From February 26 through March 1, 1993, Accuracy in Media took out full-page advertisements in newspapers around the country announcing an "all-volunteer effort" to mount a "Nationwide TV Protest" of "ONE-SIDED, NEGATIVE and DECEPTIVE" television news. However, the reply form calling for contributions to "help pay for another ad and bring back to TV one of our country's most precious rights: honest, fair, unbiased news" appeared over the name of AIM Chairman Reed Irvine.

At the same time, full-page ads labeled "A GRASSROOTS PETITION TO THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY" decrying the "PROFANITY, NUDITY, SEX, VIOLENCE and KILLINGS" portrayed on television and in movies and music videos appeared in other newspapers. Again, the reply form called for contributions to "help pay for another ad and get those in charge to SET STANDARDS and ENFORCE THEM," but this ad identified the sponsor as the "American Family Association, Dr. Donald E. Wildmon, President."

While attacks on mass media content by political and religious idealogues are nothing new, the simultaneous appearance of two such efforts coupled with the striking similarities in content and format of the ads suggests an orchestrated effort. That Donald E. Wildmon chose to identify himself as "Dr." instead of as "The Rev.," a title he more commonly uses, suggests an attempt to broaden the campaign's appeal and gain or re-gain the members and momentum conservatives appeared to have during the Reagan-Bush years and now may see slipping away with the election of a Democratic president.

Certainly neither political nor religious conservatives have a monopoly on media criticism, but there are fundamental differences both in the criticisms and tactics between liberals and conservatives. Both political and religious liberals generally accept and expect the press to act as a watch-dog and to cover a variety of subject matter, issues and viewpoints. They complain primarily about omissions and about inaccurate and shallow news coverage (Buddenbaum 1990a). Although the current "political correctness" movement may signal a change, during the past decade liberals have rarely called for boycotts in response to material they find negative or offensive (Noble 1990).

In contrast to liberals who rarely complain about deliberate bias, religious conservatives more often equate presentation of material they find offensive or of viewpoints with which they disagree with a concerted attack on them and their religious freedom (Buddenbaum 1990a). Rather than accept or enter into true dialogue with those holding different worldviews, their response is likely to be campaigns and boycotts against those who have not censored themselves according to conservative Christian standards (Podesta and Kurtzke 1990; Fackler 1990).

In his study of complaints since 1977 emanating from the Rev. Donald E. Wildmon's National Federation for Decency, Alley (1990:267) reports that, "Since the election of President Reagan there has surfaced a new and strident community bent upon imposing certain ideological guidelines....It has its own blacklist of series and sponsors." Similarly, Schultze (1990:23) notes that conservative Christians have a "love-hate relationship with the mass media" which, to them, represent "both a marvelous technology of hope and an apostate culture of despair" to be avoided lest it lead them astray

(Wald, Owen and Hill, 1989; Bourgault 1985).

In 1984 televangelist Jimmy Swaggart ordered his employees to sign contracts forbidding them to talk to reporters; both he and Jim Bakker used their programs to discredit the news media. In 1985, Bakker called for a boycott of the Charlotte (North Carolina) Observer which printed the original stories about improprieties within his PTL ministry (Gordon 1986).

Pat Robertson's 700 Club regularly features a news-magazine segment as well as guest appearances by Jay Sekulow who also has his own program devoted to news of legal efforts to fight "threats to religious freedom"; Jack VanImpe and the lesser-know "The Week in Bible Prophecy" present apocalyptic versions of current events. Similarly, religious publications such as Dr. James Dobson's Focus on the Family and Wildmon's NFD Journal present news and a world view at odds with the versions of reality portrayed in newspapers and on commercial television newscasts.

As Berger (1967) points out, accepting a religion and being active in it means buying into a distinctive "plausibility structure." Because each of these religious worldviews is somewhat diffferent from every other religious plausibility structure and from the secular worldview, one might expect a relationship between religiosity and comfort with the worldview presented by secular mass media. However, in contrast to the ever-increasing body of literature on the role of religion in the political process, relatively little attention has been devoted to the relationship between religion and use of or trust in mass media. Indeed, only studies relating community ties to newspaper and television use consistently include any mention of religion.

Those studies within the community ties research tradition report positive correlations between use of local news media and most forms of community involvement including both political activity and membership or activity in the institutional church (Stamm 1985; Stamm and Fortini-Campbell 1983). Stamm and Weis (1986) reported a significant, postive correlation among Catholics between readership of a diocesan newspaper and attention to general circulation newspapers. No information is available to indicate whether the correlations they found for Catholics also occur among Protestants.

While the body of evidence from the community ties literature suggests religious conservatives, who usually are more active in their churches than are religious liberals, may be the most regular readers of daily newspapers and that those who attend to the electronic church may also be heavy mass media users, other evidence suggests that conservative Christians are more likely than liberals to avoid mass media content with which they disagree.

In a survey designed to determine whether conservative Christians avoid the entertainment programs their clergy leaders denounce, Roberts (1980) found that conservative Christians were less likely than others to watch sexually oriented programs, but there was no difference between conservative Christians, liberal Christians and the general population in attention to violent entertainment.

More recently, McFarland and Warren (1992; McFarland 1991) found that, in general, respondents in their fundamentalist sample expressed greater desire to read pro-fundamentalist articles than anti-fundamentalist ones. However, supporting the validity of conceptualizing quest as an open-minded search for truth, they also found that those fundamentalists who measured higher on quest scales were more likely than others to express interest in reading both the anti-fundamentalist articles and ones on secular topics.

Religion-as-quest represents an aspect of mature religion (Allport 1950). As such it taps a desire to view information which both supports and contradicts one's belief. Therefore, measures of quest orientation have demonstrated value in predictions regarding selective exposure to belief-confirming information and the selective avoidance of information contrary to one's beliefs (McFarland and Warren 1992; McFarland 1991).

Although Roberts (1980) noted in passing that his data showed no difference in newspaper use between religious conservatives and liberals, research conducted during the 1988 election campaign (Buddenbaum 1991, 1990b, 1989) found that religious liberals were more interested in the election and more attentive to media coverage than were religious conservatives. Consistent with McFarland's findings (1991; McFarland and Warren 1992), religious liberals, who are more likely than conservatives to have a quest orientation to religion, were more independent in their information gathering and analysis than were conservatives. However, in contrast to the community ties research on Catholics, inactive conservative Christians were more likely than active ones to use the mass media for political news and to rely on it for political information.

Taken together, these few studies suggest active conservative Christians may be sensitive to the complaints their leaders raise about news coverage. While they may avoid content which contradicts their world view or which simply doesn't address their concerns, media use and media trust are not necessarily related.

Most credibility studies report positive correlations between a lack of trust in media and perceptions that the media are sensationalistic, biased and unfair (Gaziano 1987; Galician and Vestre 1987; McGrath and Gaziano 1986; Haskins and Metler 1984), but they also show that perceptions of bias do not translate into less readership or satisfaction with newspapers (Burgoon, Burgoon and Butler 1987).

While these studies suggest there may be a link between religion and trust in news from the mass media, they do not explore the possibility. However, Gunther's (1988) finding that trust is highest among political moderates and lowest among political conservatives suggests that there may be a similar link between religious conservatism and distrust of mass media.

Relatively successful political mobilization efforts by the religious right are both well-documented and widely known (Hunter 1990; Podesta and Kurtzke 1990; Hadden and Shupe 1988; Stacey and Shupe 1984; Bromley and Shupe 1984; Leibman 1983; Nelkin 1982). Therefore, it seems reasonable to expect that campaigns dating back to the mid-1970s to discredit the mass media and promote the conservative Christian worldview may also have been as successful. If that is true, the effect should manifest itself in a lack of trust of news from the mass media among conservative Christians. If such a relationship exists, religion and particularly ties to conservative Christianity could help explain recent decreases in public esteem for the news media (Gaziano 1987; McGrath and Gaziano 1986).

Therefore, this study uses 1992 survey data to test six hypotheses:

H1: Those for whom religion is very important will trust news from the mass media less than those with weaker ties to religion.

H2: Christians with a quest orientation will trust mass media more than those ranking lower on this dimension.

H3: Conservative Christians will trust news from mass media less than will more liberal Christians.

H4: Those who are active in a local congregation will trust news from the mass media less than those with weaker ties to the institutional church.

H5: Those who use religious information sources regularly will trust news from the mass media less than those who do not use religious media.

H6: The relationships posited in Hypotheses 1 through 5 will be stronger for television than for newspapers; they will be weakest for radio and for magazines.

Methodology

Data for this study come from a telephone survey of 987 Middletown (Muncie, Indiana) residents 18 and older conducted during the three weeks prior to the 1992 presidential election. Using a random number generator, phone numbers were selected from among all eligible exchanges in the Muncie SMA. Completed interviews were obtained from approximately 70 percent of the households contacted.

Questions in the survey were designed to determine religious and political ideology and activity, political interest and opinions, use of religious and mass media information sources, community ties and standard demographics.

Trust was measured by individual questions asking respondents whether they consider radio, television, newspapers and magazines "very trustworthy," "somewhat trustworthy," "not very trustworthy," or "not at all trustworthy" as sources of political information.

Although media credibility studies indicate multiple dimensions are involved in assessments of news quality (Burgoon, Burgoon and Butler 1987; McGrath and Gaziano 1985), the single item asking about trust was chosen because a pre-test of the questionnaire and in-depth interviews with members of six Middletown congregations indicated it best captured the idea of suspicion suggested by many religious critiques of mass media. Questions asking about bias were specifically rejected because too many respondents, both liberal and conservative, detected some bias but still said they can rely on the media for reasonably accurate information. In the pre-test there was only a weak correlation between the questions about trust and bias and even less variance in responses to the bias question than was true for the one asking about trust.

For this study, factor analysis and correlations were used to combine 24 questions into nine indices tapping four dimensions of religiosity: **salience, quest orientation, beliefs and behavior.** All indices have a Cronbach's alpha of at least .75 and include only those measures with at least a .5 correlation with all other items in the index.

The single measure of **salience** is a simple, additive scale created by combining questions asking, "How important is your religion to you" with a likert item asking for agreement/disagreement with the statement, "My whole approach to life is based on my religion."

Quest orientation was measured by combining two items. These likert items use a five-point scale asking for agreement/disagreement with the statements, "I constantly question my religious beliefs" and "I never doubt the existence of God." The first statement was chosen as the strongest loading on the "openness to change" dimension of Batson and Schoenrade's 12-item quest scale (1991a; 1991b). The second, borrowed from McFarland (1991, 1990), is the antithesis of the quest orientation and was reverse coded. It is similar to measures used in studies of dogmatism.

Four **belief** measures were used in this study. Christian orthodoxy was measured with a scale combining responses to likert items positing the divinity of Christ, his imminent second coming, Biblical inerrancy and the reality of miracles.

The single question: "On religious matters would you describe yourself as strongly conservative, conservative, moderate, liberal or strongly liberal?" was used as a measure of religious traditionalism. Pre-testing and in-depth interviews suggest this measure includes a component of orthodoxy, but is more often interpreted by respondents as asking about adherence to traditional moral values and/or a preference for order and predictability in church practices rather than for change in them.

An experiential aspect of belief was measured by combining questions asking respondents whether or not they consider themselves born again, how important being born again is to them, and whether "being charismatic or speaking in tongues is an important element" in their religion.

As a fourth measure, answers to a question asking respondents if they identify with a local church and, if so, which local church or synagogue they attend most often were analyzed by broad categories and by denomination and congregation within each category. Most congregations were assigned to broad categories along denominational lines, but some individual congregations were placed in a different category because of the congregation's special characteristics.

Broad categories used in this study include: Pentecostal (Assembly of God, Apostolic, Church of God-Mountain Assembly, Church of God Full Gospel, Church of God in Christ, FourSquare Gospel, Full Gospel, Pentecostal and some independent congregations); Holiness (Church of Christ in Christian Union, Nazarene, Seventh Day Adventist); Fundamentalist (Independent, National, Separate and United Baptists; Church of Christ, Church of God, Church of God-Anderson, and some individual congregations); Evangelical (Southern Baptist, Bible Holiness, several Brethren congregations, Presbyterian-PCA, non-denominational and some individual congregations); Mainline (African Methodist Episcopal, American Baptist, Christian Science, Church of Christ-Independent, Christian-Disciples of Christ, Friends, Lutheran-ELCA, Presbyterian-USA, Unitarian Universalist, United Methodist); Roman Catholic; Non-Christian: and no religion.

The **behavior** measures include ties to the institutional church, private religious activity, and attention to religious television and religious publications. The church ties measure combined questions asking respondents whether they are "very," "somewhat," "not very," or "not at all active" in a church or religious organization, how often they attend worship services (with eight response options ranging from "never" to "more than once a week"), and whether they consider themselves "a person who contributes to church decisions," "a leader, but not one of the decision-makers," "active, nut not a leader," "just an ordinary church member, or "not really a part of the church."

Private devotional activity combined questions asking respondents whether they "read the Bible or devotional materials" and engage in "private prayer or meditation" "daily," "several days each week," "weekly," "less than weekly" or "never."

Questions asking whether respondents "read religious magazines or newspapers a lot, some, a little or not at all" and whether they "get a lot, some, a little or no political information from religious publications" were combined to measure use of religious publications. The use of religious television measure was constructed by combining questions asking respondents whether they "watch religious television programs almost every daily, several days each week, weekly, occasionally or never" and whether they "get a lot, some, a little or no political information from religious television."

Responses to questions asking respondents whether they get political information from religious publications and religious television programs and, if so, which publications and programs they use were also analyzed.

Findings

Two-thirds of all respondents considered television, newspapers and magazines somewhat trustworthy; three-fourths said the same about radio as a source of political information. While only 3 percent said radio is not at all trustworthy, the 9 percent who said it is very trustworthy was a lower proportion of all respondents than said the same of the other media. About 4 percent said television and newspapers are not at all trustworthy; just over 12 percent said they are very trustworthy. Magazines had the highest levels of both trust and distrust. While 6 percent said they are not at all trustworthy, 15 percent said they are very trustworthy.

An examination of trust as a function of religiosity offers some weak support for ~~the~~ five of the six hypotheses. Both correlations and regression analysis indicate a relationship between trust in mass media as sources of news and various dimensions of religiosity. However, the relationships vary somewhat by medium.

Hypothesis 1, predicting those for whom religion is very important would trust the media less than those for whom religion is less salient, received very little support. The negative correlations between salience and trust in television and in magazines offer weak support to the hypothesis; however, contrary to the hypothesis, those for whom religion is salient were more likely to trust radio and newspapers than those for whom religion is unimportant. But in no case were the relationships between salience and trust statistically significant. (Table 1) Therefore, this hypothesis must be rejected.

As predicted by Hypothesis 2, those scoring high on the quest measure trusted each medium more than those who do not view religion as quest. This relationship was statistically significant for radio, television and newspapers, but not for magazines. (Table 1)

Of those who scored highest on the quest measure, about one-fourth called radio and television very trustworthy. About one-third considered newspapers and magazines very trustworthy. In contrast, of those scoring lowest on the quest measure, only about 10 percent considered magazines a very trustworthy source of information, while only about 5 percent said the same about radio, television or newspapers.

Hypothesis 3, positing that conservative Christians would be less trusting than liberal ones, received some support. As predicted, those scoring lowest on the orthodoxy scale were significantly more likely to trust newspapers and magazines than were those scoring higher. The negative correlations between experientialism and trust also support the hypothesis. Those describing themselves as born again and/or charismatic were less likely to trust the media than those who do not describe themselves that way. However, contrary to expectation, those who described themselves as conservative on religious matters were more likely to trust television, newspapers and magazines than were those who described themselves as liberal. (Table 1)

Additional support for Hypothesis 3 comes from the analysis by broad categories. The relationship between church membership and trust is statistically significant for television and magazines as sources of political information, but not for radio or newspapers. For both television and magazines, Catholics, those who belong to non-Christian religions and those reporting no religion were most likely to say they are very trustworthy sources of political information. Fundamentalists and Evangelicals were unusually likely to say television is not at all trustworthy; however, distrust was unexpectedly high among members of some Mainline churches. Fundamentalists and those reporting no religion were most likely to say magazines are not at all trustworthy, but distrust was also high among Pentecostals and members of Mainline churches. (Table 2)

While the relationships for radio and newspapers were not statistically significant, members of non-Christian religions were most likely to say radio is a very trustworthy source of political information, while those with no religion and Fundamentalists were most likely to say it is not at all trustworthy. For newspapers, trust appeared highest among Catholics, non-Christians and those with no religion and lowest among Fundamentalists and Evangelicals. (Table 2)

Within the Fundamentalist group, approximately one-third of those who say each of the media is not very or not at all trustworthy come from one large independent Baptist church; about half come from smaller independent Baptist churches or ones representing various Baptist alliances. Among Evangelicals, about one-third of those who distrust the media are Southern Baptist and about one-third come from a large conservative and mildly charismatic church affiliated with the United Methodist denomination, while the rest are scattered among congregations representing six different denominations. Within the Mainline category, distrust appears concentrated among American Baptists and Disciples of Christ. While only 7 percent of all Mainline respondents are from those two denominations, they account for between 12 and 15 percent of all Mainline respondents who say each of the media are not at all or not very trustworthy.

As predicted by Hypotheses 4 and 5, those most active in a local church and those who use religious information sources were less likely to trust the media than were those less tied into religious institutions. However, only the correlations between church ties and trust in magazines, use of religious publications and trust in television, and use of religious television and trust in magazines were statistically significant. (Table 1)

Among those who use religious publications the least, 16 percent called television a very trustworthy source of political information while only 3 percent of the heavy users of religious publications had that opinion of television news. Similarly, 16 percent of those least likely to watch religious television called magazines trustworthy, but only 7 percent of the most frequent viewers said magazines are trustworthy.

The half of all respondents who reported reading religious publications at least occasionally were divided among Catholics and liberal and conservative Protestants proportionally to their representation in the sample and in the community. However, only about half of those said they get political information from religious publications. Those who do named 79 different publications, all but about a dozen of them Catholic or conservative Christian.

In most cases, fewer than five of the 141 respondents who reported using religious publication for political information named a particular source. However, 18 mentioned Focus on the Family and 15 named Sunday Visitor, the Catholic diocesan newspaper. While the numbers are small, it is noteworthy that about one-third of those who named each of those publications said each of the four media are either not very trustworthy or not at all trustworthy as sources of political information.

Similarly, about half of the respondents admitted to watching religious television at least occasionally, but only about 20 percent said they get at least a little political information from the programs they watch. While most programs got fewer than five mentions, Pat Robertson or the 700 Club was named by 68 respondents. Depending on the medium, between one-sixth (radio) and one-third (television and magazines) of those had a negative opinion of the mass media as sources of political information. Those respondents account for between 8 and 10 percent of all respondents who say radio, television, newspapers or magazines are not very or not at all trustworthy as sources of political information.

Hypothesis 6, predicting that the relationships between religion and trust would be stronger for television than for newspapers and for newspapers than for radio and magazines, received mixed support. Measures of quest orientation, private devotional activity and use of religious publications were indeed more indicative of trust in television than in any of the other media; the belief measures appear more indicative of trust in newspapers than of trust in television. Orthodoxy was significantly related only to trust of newspapers and magazines.

While those findings support Hypothesis 6, contrary to expectations there is no evidence that the religious measures are more useful with the major media than they are with radio and magazines. Indeed, the pattern of significant correlations suggest that the real differences occur between broadcast and print media. Private devotional activity appears more related to trust in radio and television, while activity in a local congregation is more related to trust in print media. More importantly, the negative correlations between use of religious publications and trust in broadcast media and between use of religious television and trust in print media were stronger than those between use of religious publications and trust in print media or between use of religious television and trust in broadcast news.

Entering the religious measures into regression equations indicates they do have some value as predictors of trust, in most cases even after demographic variables have been added as controls.

For the broadcast media, scoring high on the quest scale and low in private devotional activities and in church activity, all of which are associated with religious liberalism, are statistically significant predictors of trust in radio and in television. Low use of religious publications also is a statistically significant predictor of trust in television news; however, contrary to expectations, scoring high in orthodoxy also predicts trust. (Table 3)

Together, the nine religious measures explain only about 3 percent of the variance in trust in radio. When the demograpics are added, scoring low on orthodoxy and having a low household income become statistically significant predictors along with quest and devotional activity; however, these additions result in a decrease in statistical significance for the overall regression equation and a slight decrease in the amount of variance explained. (Table 3)

For television, the nine religion measures explain about 5 percent of the variance in trust. Because all of the demographics are statistically significant predictors of trust in television, adding them to the regression equation explains an additional 5 percent of variance; however, adding them replaces orthodoxy with church activity as a predictor. (Table 3)

In sharp contrast to the findings for the broadcast media, neither the nine religious measures alone nor the four demographic ones are statistically significant predictors for newspapers. At best, they explain only about 1 percent of the variance in trust. In the case of magazines, the effect of education is so strong that adding it along with the other three demographic variables produces a statistically significant regression equation. However, as was true for newspapers, the equation as a whole explains only about 1 percent of the variance in trust in magazines as a source of political information. (Table 4)

Conclusion

Results of this study indicate that religion plays a role in whether or not people consider the mass media a trustworthy source of political information. However, the relationship between religion and trust is neither strong nor clear.

Neither the importance people attach to their religion nor how active they are in a local congregation appeared to have much bearing on trusting news from radio, television, newspapers or magazines. This may mean nothing more than that these measures do not adequately tap the dimensions of religiosity that are important determinants of trust. Certainly people with various religious orientations and those holding many different beliefs will say their religion is important to them. They are also equally likely to be active in their churches. However, the fact that these measures appear unrelated to trust suggests it is not religiosity _per se_ that is important, but rather one's orientation to religion, the particular beliefs one holds and the messages received and re-enforced through membership in a particular faith community that make a difference.

Consistent with previous research indicating that measures of religion-as-quest have value in predicting whether people will selectively avoid information contrary to their beliefs, this study found that for all media, scoring high on measures of religion-as-quest is significantly related to trust in media. For radio and newspapers it is the strongest predictor among the nine religious measures considered in this study.

While the measures work somewhat differently for each of the four media, the relationships between trust in the media and private devotional activity, traditionalism, and holding orthodox Christian beliefs tend to support the hypothesis that conservative Christians have less trust in the news media than do more liberal Christians. Further analysis indicates that, in general, non-Christians and those with no religion are significantly more likely to trust the media as a source of political information than are Christians; liberal Protestants are more likely to trust the media than are conservative Protestants. That members of some individual denominations and specific congregations within the broader categories and fans of particular religious publications and religious television programs are less likely to trust the media suggests socialization and specific teachings of a particular faith community may play an important role in determining whether or not people trust the media.

Findings may be specific to Middletown, where this survey was conducted, but data indicate that distrust of the media appears strongest in several large Evangelical and Fundamentalist congregations; among Southern Baptists, American Baptists and Disciples of Christ; among fans of Pat Robertson and the 700 Club; and among readers of Focus on the Family and of the Catholic diocesan newspaper.

Although religion appears to play a role in determining whether or not people trust the media, it certainly is not the only factor. Results of this study found religious measures predictive of trust only for radio and television. But even there, the nine measures included in the regression equation accounted for less than 5 percent of the variance in trust.

Low use of religious publications was associated with trust of radio and television while low use of religious television was associated with trust in newspapers and magazines suggests. This suggests that people who prefer to get their information from the printed page will use and trust any print medium more than an equivalent audio-visual one. Those who prefer an audio-visual format will use and trust broadcasting over print.

Preference for a delivery format may also be related to education and socioeconomic status. The results of this study suggest there may be a class element involved in determining media trust. Previous research has consistently shown that women and people with low socioeconomic status are heavier users of television, while men and those with higher education and socioeconomic status are heavier users of newspapers (Weaver and Buddenbaum 1980). Adding these demographic measures to the regression equation added about 5 percent to the variance in trust of television explained by the religion measures. Although the overall regression equation was not significant, being highly educated was the only significant predictor of trust in magazines.

These findings suggest that future work on the role of religion in media use and trust should examine interactive effects among the religion variables and between information content, delivery format, education, socioeconomic status and religion. Comparative studies of media use and trust levels in specific religious communities should also be conducted as a way of taking into account the messages about media people receive.

Data from a single survey cannot show that religion causes people to distrust the media. However, exposure over time to pronouncements about the media almost certainly have some socializing effect, particularly if they come from respected religious sources. While it may be that those who are pre-disposed to distrust the media for reasons totally unrelated to religion gravitate to supportive churches, religious publications or religious television programs, the existence of communities of like-minded people makes the task of converting beliefs into action easier. The results of this study provide little evidence that recent campaigns against the mass media by conservative religious leaders have had any effect on people's trust in news from the mass media, but mobilization efforts against the mass media are more likely to succeed when they can build on pre-existing communities for support.

The mass media cannot and should not tailor their news coverage to suit the beliefs of any particular special interest group. However, journalists might be wise to monitor church teachings, religious publications and religious programs regularly and incorporate information gained in that way into their routine news coverage.

Systematic coverage of the issues and viewpoints important within faith communities may not be enough to placate those who expect the mass media to act as boosters for their cause, but sensitive, accurate attention to the issues that concern them might help defuse mobilization efforts against the mass media. At the very least, such coverage would foster public awareness of the concerns and issue positions of an important and increasingly vocal segment of society.

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Table 1

Pearson's Correlations between Dimensions of Religiosity and Trust in News from the Mass Media

Religiosity Dimension	Medium Radio	Television	Newspapers	Magazines
Salience	.013	-.022	.004	-.058
Quest Orientation	.097*	.119**	.108**	.060
Beliefs				
Experientialism	-.051	-.010	-.033	-.051
Traditionalism	.002	-.009	-.041	-.025
Orthodoxy	-.062	-.013	-.085*	-.083*
Behavior				
Private Devotion	-.097*	-.131**	-.068	-.073
Church ties	-.050	-.047	-.065	-.095*
Use of Religious Publications	-.067	-.114**	-.023	-.005
Use of Religious Television	-.047	-.039	-.063	-.085*

* $p \leq .05$
** $p \leq .01$

Table 2

Church Affiliation and Trust in Media

Medium/		Level of Trust		
Affiliation	Not at All	Not Very	Somewhat	Very
Radio				
Pentecostal (n=57)	3.5 %	15.8 %	70.2 %	10.5%
Holiness (n=31)	---	16.1	77.4	6.5
Fundamentalist (n=100)	5.0	11.0	77.0	7.0
Evangelical (n=54)	1.9	16.7	72.2	9.3
Mainline (n=401)	4.0	14.5	73.1	8.5
Roman Catholic (n=87)	3.4	13.8	70.1	12.6
Non-Christian (n=26)	---	11.5	65.4	23.1
None (n=156)	7.1	9.0	70.5	13.5
Chi Square 20.426	df 21	p = n.s.		
Television				
Pentecostal (n=61)	1.6	13.1	68.9	16.4
Holiness (n=32)	---	25.0	56.3	18.8
Fundamentalist (n=103)	5.8	10.7	70.9	12.6
Evangelical (n=57)	7.0	17.5	66.7	8.8
Mainline (n=421)	5.7	17.3	66.0	10.9
Roman Catholic (n=87)	1.1	20.7	56.3	21.8
Non-Christian (n=29)	3.4	17.2	58.6	20.7
None (n=166)	4.2	12.7	60.8	22.3
Chi Square 32.867	df 21	$p < .05$		
Newspapers				
Pentecostal (n=61)	1.6	13.1	68.9	16.4
Holiness (n=33)	---	24.2	63.6	12.1
Fundamentalist (n=102)	8.8	13.7	71.6	5.9
Evangelical (n=57)	8.8	24.6	57.9	8.8
Mainline (n=422)	5.0	18.0	64.0	13.0
Roman Catholic (n=88)	4.5	15.9	62.5	17.0
Non-Christian (n=28)	---	14.3	67.9	17.9
None (n=165)	6.1	12.1	63.6	18.2
Chi Square 26.990	df 21	p = n.s.		
Magazines				
Pentecostal (n=56)	7.1	26.8	58.9	7.1
Holiness (n=31)	---	22.6	58.1	19.4
Fundamentalist (n=95)	12.6	12.6	64.2	10.5
Evangelical (n=53)	5.7	22.6	58.5	13.2
Mainline (n=391)	7.4	14.3	64.2	14.1
Roman Catholic (n=80)	3.8	12.5	62.5	21.3
Non-Christian (n=27)	---	18.5	59.3	22.2
None (n=153)	12.4	15.7	51.6	20.3
Chi Square 35.016	df 21	$p < 05$		

Table 3

Religious and Demographic Variables as Predictors of Trust in Broadcast Media

Predictor	Radio		Television	
Religious Variables				
Salience	.089	.086	.091	.088
Quest Orientation	.124**	.124**	.160***	.162***
Experientialism	-.021	-.024	.073	.049
Traditionalism	-.063	-.066	.026	.004
Orthodoxy	-.101	-.112*	.108*	.013
Private Devotion	-.123*	-.121*	-.230***	-.213***
Church Ties	-.083	-.083	.060	.104*
Use of Religious Publications	-.070	-.058	-.128**	-.089
Use of Religious Television	-.001	-.017	.009	-.001
Demographic Variables				
Age		.000		-.138***
Education		.006		-.126**
Household Income		-.088*		-.086*
Sex[1]		.016		.131***
R^2	.049	.056	.071	.129
Adj. R^2	.028	.026	.051	.101
R^2 Change		(-.002)		.050
F	2.36***	1.87**	3.55***	4.68***

* $p \leq .1$
** $p \leq .05$
*** $p \leq .01$

[1] Dummy variable analysis was used to enter sex in the regression equation. A positive value indicates being female is correlated with trust.

Table 4

Religious and Demographic Variables as Predictors of Trust in Print Media

Predictor	Newspapers		Magazines	
Religious Variables				
Salience	.091	.089	-.001	-.005
Quest Orientation	.076	.078	.059	.060
Experientialism	.074	.077	-.005	.019
Traditionalism	.000	-.004	-.009	-.009
Orthodoxy	-.081	-.080	-.038	.011
Private Devotion	-.024	-.028	-.056	-.071
Church Ties	-.045	-.044	-.032	-.056
Use of Religious Publications	.012	.013	.045	.030
Use of Religious Television	-.053	-.051	-.080	-.064
Demographic Variables				
Age		-.008		.002
Education		.020		.143***
Household Income		-.010		.021
Sex[1]		.025		-.004
R^2	.017	.018	.028	.047
Adj. R^2	.004	.013	.007	.016
R^2 Change		.009		.009
F	.807	.588	1.31	1.55*

* $p \leq .1$
** $p \leq .05$
*** $p \leq .01$

---

[1] Dummy variable analysis was used to enter sex in the regression equation. A positive value indicates being female is correlated with trust.

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THE WAR ON DRUGS: A CONSTRUCTIONIST VIEW

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THE WAR ON DRUGS: A CONSTRUCTIONIST VIEW

In recent years, many American news organizations have described drug-related issues and events in terms of "war." This sort of characterization was especially evident in the fall of 1989, when President Bush launched his new "War on Drugs." In this paper, we perform a constructionist analysis on 202 newspaper articles written in 1989. We demonstrate a way that constructionist analysis -- a qualitative method -- can be used together with factor analysis to probe news articles for latent structures of meaning. We also use multiple regression analysis to demonstrate the "spin" that various journalistic sources have fostered in newspaper articles about drugs.

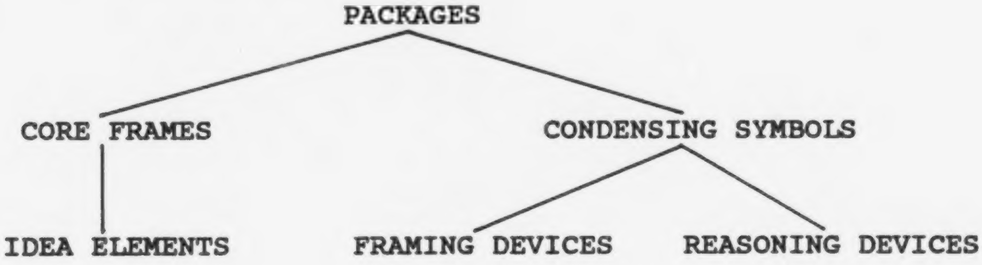
America's "War on Drugs" is a controversial issue, and one that's garnered much attention in the news media. In recent years, the U.S. federal government has battled with other "stakeholders" to control the ways in which drug-related news stories are framed. These stakeholders -- or parties with vested interests -- have helped to fill the newspapers and airwaves with drug news stories that are rhetorically charged. When stakeholders act as journalistic sources, they often promote stories that are laden with metaphors, catchy phrases and other semantic devices, in an effort to put a particular "spin" on the issue.[1] [2]

In this study we examine newspaper coverage during the fall of 1989, the time when President Bush first announced his own War on Drugs. Specifically, we perform a constructionist analysis (Gamson, 1989 and 1988; Gamson and Lasch, 1983; Gamson and Modigliani, 1989 and 1987) on a sample of drug-related articles, to demonstrate the different kinds of spin that sources have put into them. We also study the link between distinct types of journalistic sources and the specific kinds of spin they help to produce.

THE CONSTRUCTIONIST APPROACH

Constructionist analysis differs from traditional content analysis in the following way: while content analysts typically focus on the manifest informational content of texts, those who use the constructionist approach place more emphasis on the interpretive commentary that surrounds this manifest content (Gamson, 1989, p. 158). Constructionists do not ponder the meaning of aggregations of words or phrases; instead, they probe news articles and other texts for the presence of *packages* (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989, p. 3). These packages are schemes that people use to construct meanings in messages they send, and to interpret meanings in messages they receive. Packages contain *core frames*, or central organizing ideas that help the speaker to convey "what's at issue," and the *idea elements*[3] of which they're made. Packages also contain *condensing symbols* -- linguistic and rhetorical devices that tie discrete bits of content together and situate them within an emerging context (Gamson, 1989, p. 158). There are two types of condensing symbols: *framing devices*[4] and *reasoning devices*.[5]

We can summarize the hierarchy of textual structures listed above in the following diagram:



While the comparison is not directly analogous, one can see that packages and "package parts" (core frames and condensing symbols) are conceptually related in a way that's similar to the "Concept-Dimension-Indicator" model for hypothetico-deductive research. Packages are the most abstract of these structures, while idea elements, framing devices and reasoning devices can be readily identified in the text of a news story.[6]

The structural features of packages found in a sample of news articles or other texts can be summarized in a table that Gamson and Modigliani call the signature matrix. In this paper we use a signature matrix to summarize the core frames and condensing symbols that newspaper reporters use when writing about drug-related topics. Analysts using the constructionist approach can identify "package parts" and aggregate them into a coherent whole -- the package itself. In so doing, they explore the richness and complexity of texts in a way that conventional content analysts cannot.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Using the constructionist approach, we set out to describe the packages found in newspaper articles about drug-related issues and events. This task brings two questions to mind:

1. Can we identify core frames and condensing symbols within news texts, and then aggregate them into packages through exploratory factor analysis?[7]
2. Is there any link between the kinds of sources used in news articles and the occurrence of certain packages in those same articles?[8]

While our research questions focus on methodological issues, the answers to these questions will also provide substantive information about the ways that journalists and their sources help to shape news stories about the War on Drugs.

STUDY DESIGN/ANALYSIS

To address the first research question, we conducted a constructionist analysis of articles from a local daily newspaper. To address the second research question, we used multiple regression analysis to find any associations between sources cited in the articles, and the packages found in those same articles.

ANALYSIS - PHASE 1:

The unit of analysis for our study was the news article. We examined 202 articles published in the Wisconsin State Journal[9] between September 1, 1989 and November 11, 1989. These articles represent about two-thirds of all drug-related articles published by the newspaper during the sampling period; the remaining articles were used to pretest early drafts of the content code. The sampling period includes the date of President Bush's nationally televised Drug War speech (Sep. 5). It marks a time when the Associated Press and other news services wrote a large number of articles about the speech, and its impact on legislators at both the state and national levels.[10]

The first step in this phase of the analysis was construction of a signature matrix (**Figure 1**); a summary of the packages and "package parts" that can be found in contemporary writing about drug-related issues. We constructed this matrix by reading 93 relevant news articles and op-ed pieces, noting carefully the core frames and condensing symbols used therein. We supplemented this work by reading a wide range of books, journal articles, and magazine articles written by academics in the fields of criminology, history, journalism and mass communication, political science, psychology and psychiatry. This literature represents viewpoints about drugs that range across all parts of the "left to right" political continuum in America.

Next, we made a tentative list of packages found in articles about drug-related issues:

WAR: There are two main core frames in the war package: (1) the effort by government officials in the U.S. and Columbia to convince citizens that drugs are a national security threat; and (2) statements by U.S. politicians who think drugs are bad, but don't approve of warlike anti-drug policies.

RESISTANCE: The main goal of resisters is to demonstrate that drugs and drugs users are not to blame for society's problems. They see the "War on Drugs" as a violation of personal freedoms.

TREATMENT: Advocates of this package feel that drug addiction is preventable and treatable. They maintain that treatment and education efforts are preferable to law enforcement, when it comes to curbing drug abuse.

SICKNESS: The core frame of this package is a view that substance abuse and addiction are social diseases. Addiction is viewed as "contagious;" a problem that threatens to spread to "normal" parts of society.

This list of packages served as the "backbone" of our emerging content code.

Based on our reading of news and academic articles, we constructed a list of 77 idea elements, 30 catch phrases and 23 metaphors.[11] To facilitate greater ease in coding, we grouped these package parts together under headings that indicate the package they are theoretically associated with **(see Figure 2 for a sample page of the content code)**.

While the coding of metaphors and catchphrases was a straightforward procedure, the coding of idea elements requires a bit of explanation. Idea elements are elements of thought that become manifest in the text of a news article, and they can be located through a close reading of each relevant passage. To illustrate the coding of idea elements, let's consider a paragraph from a newspaper story on September 3, 1989 about President Bush's forthcoming Drug War proposal. In this paragraph, a drug treatment expert comments on the role of "drug czar" William Bennett in the formation of Bush's policy positions.

> Robert Newman, president of the Beth Israel Medical Center in New York, praised Bennett for recommending more spending on treatment, but said it was "an extraordinary and incomprehensible omission" that the draft [of the Bush policy] he read did not emphasize treatment on demand.

Upon reading this passage, the coder would notice two distinct trains of thought: (1) Bennett is right to recommend more spending on drug treatment, and (2) The Bush administration is wrong to omit provisions for "treatment on demand." These trains of thought would be coded as two separate idea elements

(see Figure 2): #206 - "Any drug war plan should strike a balance between punitive measures and treatment, education, and prevention measures;" and (2) #502 - ..."Everyone should be able to get treatment, if need be."

One person coded all of the desired information from the 202 articles. First, the coder located the appropriate variable name for each idea element, metaphor or catchphrase found in an article. He then indicated the number of times each of these "package parts" appeared in the article on the appropriate line of a coding sheet. Later, a second person re-coded 40 articles drawn at random, to check for intercoder reliability. Alphas ranged from 0.00 to 1.00, with an average intercoder reliability level of .892.[12]

Frequency counts of idea elements show that those associated with the WAR package were most common (75.6 %). SICKNESS idea elements were the second most common (9.9%), followed by TREATMENT (9.2%) and RESISTANCE (5.3%).

Of the four catchphrase categories, WAR catchphrases were most frequently used (68%). TREATMENT catchphrases were the second most often used (14.4%), followed by SICKNESS (9.8%) and RESISTANCE (7.8%).

Of the four metaphor categories, WAR metaphors were the most frequently used (74.1%). SICKNESS metaphors were the second most common (15.2%), followed by RESISTANCE (7.1%) and TREATMENT (3.6%).

The 12 variables described above (ex., "war metaphors," "treatment catchphrases," etc.) were factor analyzed to extract the packages present in the data set. The results of this analysis are reported later in the paper.

ANALYSIS - PHASE 2:

In this phase of the analysis (related to our second research question), we probed for associations between packages found in news stories and the sources used by journalists who wrote those stories. Again, associations between particular sources and packages may provide evidence that the sources have imparted a certain spin on journalistic coverage of the story at hand.

Each source mentioned in an article -- whether quoted directly or not -- was coded into one of seven categories: (1) FOREIGN sources (Non-government sources in Colombia, Colombian government sources, other Foreign sources); (2) U.S. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT sources; (3) STATE/LOCAL GOVERNMENT sources; (4) TREATMENT advocacy sources (non-government); (5) RESISTER sources (Pro-drug protesters, drug users, drug traffickers, drug growers, drug criminals, etc.); (6) OTHER sources; and (7) UNATTRIBUTED sources. The "Unattributed" source category was coded whenever a reporter made a controversial assertion, and no easily identifiable source could be found in (or inferred from) the text of the story.

Each article was further classified according to its author: (1) Reporter for Wisconsin State Journal, (2) Reporter for Wire

Service or Other News Service (mostly Associated Press), or Other Author (includes combined authorship). The articles were also coded according to their geographic origin; the country from which the article originates. Again, we used three categories: (1) United States, (2) Colombia or (3) Other Country.

We designed a series of multiple regression analyses to determine the kinds of packages that appeared in stories in which journalists used particular kinds of sources. Each of the four Package variables (i.e., WAR, RESISTANCE, TREATMENT, SICKNESS) was used as the dependent variable in a separate multiple regression. The main independent variables were the Source variables. We controlled for the Author and Geographic Origin of articles; these two variables were entered as dummy variable comparisons.

RESULTS

As noted earlier, we coded for a total of 77 idea element variables, 30 catchphrase variables and 23 metaphor variables. We reduced these variables to 12 variables by placing them in distinct groups; these groups might be thought of as "clusters" of theoretically associated variables. This transformation produced three "WAR" package variables (ex., IEWAR = war idea elements, MWAR = war metaphors and CWAR = war catchphrases), and three variables for each of the other packages. These variables were factor analyzed to extract the packages present in the data set.[13] Principal component extraction was used, along with varimax rotation.[14] Kaiser's rule was used to determine the number of factors to extract.

In answer to our first research question, four interpretable factors emerged from the factor analysis of idea element, catchphrase and metaphor variables **(see Table 1)**; they correspond to the four packages outlined in the section above -- Resistance, Treatment, War and Sickness.[15] [16]

We used these "package variables" to answer the second research question; namely, "is there any link between the kinds of sources used in news articles and the occurrence of certain packages in those same articles?"

Pearson correlations show that journalists who used information from U.S. Federal Government sources were more likely to use the War package in their stories ($r = .27$, $p < .001$, 1-tailed). Journalists who used more information from State/Local Government Sources were likely to use the Treatment ($r = .26$, $p < .001$, 1-tailed), Resistance ($r = .15$, $p = .014$, 2-tailed), and War packages ($r =.12$, $p = .047$, 1-tailed) in their stories.

Next, we used the four "package variables" as dependent variables in a series of multiple regression analyses **(see Table 2)**; the source variables were used as independent variables.[17] These analyses also support the notion that journalists who used government sources (both U.S. Federal Government and State/local government) were more likely to use the War package. The multiple regression analysis using the War package as the dependent variable showed that the U.S. Federal Government source variable (Beta = .40, $p < .001$) and State/local Government source variable (Beta = .35, $p < .001$) were significantly related to the use of the War package. Use of Unattributed information in articles was also significantly associated with the War package (Beta = .18, $p < .01$). The "U.S.- Colombia comparison" dummy variable was also significantly related to the War package. Though articles originating in Colombia only make up 15.3 percent of the articles sampled, a one-way ANOVA test shows that they do exhibit a relatively high mean occurrence of the War package; significantly higher than with stories originating in the United States. Thus, the density of "war" characterizations in drug-related stories from Colombia represents a significant influence on the occurrence of the War package.

The multiple regression analysis with the Treatment package as dependent variable revealed, not surprisingly, that use of the Treatment package was significantly associated with use of Treatment sources (Beta = .35, $p < .001$). This package was also associated with State/Local Government sources (Beta = .24, $p < .01$). The multiple regression analysis with the Resistance package as dependent variable was associated with the use of Resistance sources (Beta = .24, $p < .001$) and Unattributed sources (Beta = .16, $p < .05$). The "Wisconsin State Journal - Wire Service comparison" dummy variable was also significantly related to the Resistance package. This may be due to a number of stories written during the sampling period about a Madison-based group that fights for the repeal of anti-marijuana laws.

There were no significant relationships between the appearance of the Sickness package and any of the source or control variables.

CONCLUSIONS/DISCUSSION

This study supports the notion that media packages -- normally identified through constructionist analysis -- can also be identified through the use of exploratory factor analysis. By doing this, we can create quantitative variables for use in other, more sophisticated forms of statistical analysis. Our results suggest that both the manifest and latent content of news stories can be quantifiably measured. This sort of measurement allows the analyst to probe deeper into the meanings that sources and journalists give to news stories. Further knowledge about the construction of meaning during the news production process may help researchers learn more about the ways that journalists do their jobs, and the ways in which their work affects audiences.

In a substantive sense, our multivariate analyses show that journalists and their sources -- especially government sources -- largely chose to talk about drug-related issues and events in terms of "War."[18] This finding suggests that politicians, public relations practitioners and others who serve as news media sources can, and do put their own particular "spin" on a given issue, once they gain access to journalists.[19]

Our research is, in a sense, an extension of agenda-setting and agenda-building studies. McCombs (1981) has demonstrated the media's ability to cue audiences about important issues. He's also shown (1992) that politicians and other journalistic sources are able to cue the media about the importance of certain issues. The results of our study suggest that sources not only cue the media about important issues; they also interject potential meanings -- or highly specific ways of thinking about these issues -- into the stories they promote.

Much work is needed to develop this approach more fully. In particular, the development of a comprehensive lexicon of condensing symbols -- such as catchphrases, metaphors and exemplars -- would be most useful.

Our study has several limitations: (1) Gamson and Modigliani (1987) measure package prominence over time, while our study focuses on one point in time. Explanatory power could be increased if more stories were analyzed over a longer period of time. (2) The stories we sampled came from one newspaper -- the Wisconsin State Journal. Though most of these articles were written by the Associated Press (and hence published in many other papers), our study would be strengthened through analysis of other newspapers, both local and national. (3) Our analysis is focused on news texts, and not on the ways in which individual humans may read and interpret those texts. While news stories may suggest a range of meanings for audience members, the manner in which a given reader meets those meanings and creates his/her own is a topic beyond the scope of this article, and an excellent topic for future research.

We also agree with Gamson and Modigliani's suggestion that scholars should probe for possible correlations between the packages found in news articles and the schemata that audience members possess regarding a given topic.

ENDNOTES

1. Bennett (1988) writes about the process of creating "spin;" a process in which powerful sources try to advance organizational goals by packaging information for the media. He says the process involves three steps: (1) "composing a simple theme or message for the audience to use in thinking about the matter at hand;" (2) "saturating communications channels with this message so that it will become more salient than competing messages;" and (3) "surrounding the message with the trappings of credibility so that, if it reaches people, it will be accepted" (pp. 73-74).

2. For examples of drug war rhetoric, see Carlisle (1990). For discussion about the social forces that underlie this rhetoric, see Alexander (1990 a and b).

3. Gamson and Modigliani (1987, pp. 171-172) imply that idea elements -- the building blocks of core frames -- can be coded from news articles in the following way:

   (1) Coders first identify passages of articles that are relevant to the purpose of the study.

   (2) Next, they enter quotes -- along with information about their context -- onto a coding sheet or database file.

   Idea elements are passages of relevant text that center on one particular line of thought. Examples of idea elements appear at the end of this paper, in **Figure 2**. Idea element #500 captures the idea that "treatment is better than punishment," when it comes to solving drug problems. In contrast, idea element # 501 captures the idea that "addiction is a disease." One can see that these idea elements are analogous to "indicators" of different "dimensions" (core frames). These dimensions, in turn, are part of the overall "concept" (package) that describes drug treatment, education and prevention efforts.

   While Gamson and Modigliani provide information on the relationship between idea elements and other parts of media packages, they fail to define the spatial boundaries of these idea elements. Idea elements may consist of a few words, or a few sentences. Thus, we may define an idea element more specifically as "a group of words that points to a discrete line of thought, as coded in a relevant passage of a news article or other text."

   For an example of the coding of idea elements, please refer to the section in this paper titled "STUDY DESIGN/ANALYSIS."

4. Gamson and Lasch (1983, pp. 399-400) define framing devices in the following way (and with specific reference to the issue culture of the Vietnam War):

   A. METAPHORS - A metaphor always has two parts -- the principal subject that the metaphor is intended to illuminate and the associated subject that the metaphor evokes to enhance our understanding.

   B. EXEMPLARS - Real events of the past or present are frequently used to frame the principal subject. ...The Korean War was probably the most important exemplar for the Vietnam example...

   C. CATCHPHRASES - Commentators frequently try to capture the essence of an event in a single theme statement, tagline, title, or slogan that is intended to suggest a general frame. Catchphrases are attempted summary statements about the principal subject. "Invasion from the North" was the title of the State Department paper produced just prior to the Johnson administration escalation of the Vietnam War in 1965.

   D. DEPICTIONS - Packages have certain principal subjects that they characterize in a particular fashion. ...Lyndon Johnson depicted the critics of his Vietnam policy as "nervous nellies..."

   E. VISUAL IMAGES - We include here icons and other visual images that suggest the core of a package. The American flag is the most obvious icon associated with the Vietnam package...

5. Gamson and Lasch (1983, p. 400) also define reasoning devices, again, with specific reference to the issue culture of the Vietnam War:

   A. ROOTS (CAUSAL ANALYSIS) - A given package has a characteristic analysis of the causal dynamics underlying the set of events. The packages may differ in the locus of this root - that is, in the particular place in a funnel of causality to which the root calls attention. The root provided in the Vietnam package is that of a military attack by a Soviet proxy against a United States ally that is an independent country.

B. CONSEQUENCES - A given package has a characteristic analysis of the consequences that will flow from different policies. Again, there may be differences in whether short or long-term consequences are the focus. The consequences emphasized in the Vietnam example are the negative effects on American national security of a communist takeover of South Vietnam.

C. APPEALS TO PRINCIPLE - Packages rely on characteristic moral appeals and uphold certain general precepts. In the Vietnam example, the principles appealed to included the defense of the weak and innocent against unprovoked aggression and the honoring of one's word and commitment to friends.

6. For an alternative conceptualization of the structures present in news stories, see Pan and Kosicki (1993), pp. 58-63.

7. In this study, we coded more than 100 idea element, catchphrase and metaphor variables. We used factor analysis to reduce the number of variables in our analysis (i.e., to aggregate them into package variables). This task had to be completed before any attempt to answer the second research question.

8. An association between a particular source and package may indicate an effort by the source to impart "spin" on a story. For further discussion of this issue, please see CONCLUSIONS/DISCUSSION section of this paper.

9. The Wisconsin State Journal is a daily paper with a circulation of 85,803 Monday through Saturday, and a Sunday circulation of 163,240. Its strongest coverage area lies in south-central Wisconsin, in and around the capitol city of Madison.

10. Our use of the Wisconsin State Journal in this pilot study presents an interesting problem of generalizability. On the one hand, it's hard to generalize any findings based on analysis of articles published in a single paper. On the other hand, 71 percent of the sampled articles were written by reporters for the Associated Press and other news services. Since these articles likely appeared in many other newspapers around the country, we can say that our results do retain a modicum of generalizability.

In future extensions of this research the authors plan to sample articles from other newspapers, including the New York Times.

11. Coding in constructionist analysis involves the identification of idea elements (each of them related to a core frame) and a variety of condensing symbols -- both framing and reasoning devices. We restricted our coding of condensing symbols to metaphors and catchphrases for two reasons: (1) We wanted to have some quantitative record of these devices (Gamson, et. al., do not count them in any formal way), but felt that time constraints did not permit the coding of all eight condensing symbols; and (2) metaphors and catchphrases are among the most vivid framing devices used in newspaper articles. Thus, they're excellent indicators for a limited study of framing devices, and the ways in which they work together with idea elements.

12. Intercoder reliability was computed for 81 variables (a number of variables were discarded from reliability analysis, since they occurred so seldom in the 40 jointly-coded articles that computation of alphas was impossible). The coders disagreed completely on the coding of six variables; hence, the report that alphas ranged between 0.00 and 1.00. However, the coders achieved very high reliability on most of the remaining variables (alphas of .90 and above). Thus, the average reliability level was .892.

13. For the purposes of this study, we chose to perform an exploratory factor analysis. We had a fair idea going into the study about the sorts of factors that might emerge. However, we decided to use an exploratory method because of the novelty of the application; we're not aware of any other study in which factor analysis is used to help define the structures that Gamson refers to as "packages." We also used the exploratory method to establish an initial sense of construct validity among the packages. Since the resulting packages (factors) are quite distinct (see Table 1), we feel this goal has been achieved.

    Scholars seeking to replicate this study may use confirmatory factor analysis with greater confidence.

14. The authors used both varimax and oblique rotations. The results were virtually the same.

15. When we first attempted factor analysis, the "treatment metaphor" variable loaded weakly onto the Treatment factor. It was dropped, and the factor analysis was run again. The four factors from this analysis are the ones we kept; they allowed for a slight strengthening of loadings on the remaining factors.

    The results of the second factor analysis appear in Table 1.

16. This exercise is tautological, in a sense, as the variables entered into factor analysis had already been sorted into categories that reflect the final "package factors" that emerged.

Nonetheless, this factor analysis lends credence to the conceptualization of packages that we developed -- in qualitative fashion -- from the signature matrix. It also gives us a way to obtain ratio level "package variables"; variables that may subsequently be used in multiple regression analysis.

17. The authors checked for high multicollinearity between the source variables, and found that it was not a concern.

18. McCauley (1992) suggests that these representations of "War" are often made without sound empirical justification. He notes that powerful sources -- who find drug use to be morally repugnant -- have often managed to convince journalists that America's drug problems are worse than they really are. Statistics about drug use and abuse have been consistently inflated since the turn of the century.

In addition, advocates of a "War on Drugs" typically sidestep the issue of widespread alcohol and tobacco abuse in America. These drugs exact a far higher toll from the American public -- in terms of mortality and health care costs -- than do all other "illicit" drugs taken together. Yet these "legal" drugs have been mentioned far less often in the media, in terms of their detrimental effects (see pp. 21-48).

19. Efforts to impart spin do not guarantee that a journalist will write a story in the desired fashion. However, other factors -- including the organization of newswork -- may heighten the likelihood that these attempts at issue management will succeed.

Sigal (1986) says news organizations tend to dispatch reporters to routine places like Capitol Hill or City Hall, where they seek out "highly authoritative" sources. He says reporters and editors give such high-ranking sources an inordinate amount of access to the pages of their newspapers (pp. 16-20).

Gamson (1988) also writes about the role of newswork in the creation of media packages. Specifically, he says that (1) journalistic work is organized by a "balance" norm, which calls for the balancing of two competing views within most stories; (2) the balance norm seldom allows for media packages that seriously contest those offered by government and other official sources; (3) journalists are likely to have routine relationships with government and other official sources; and (4) journalists -- consciously or unconsciously -- often designate a package suggested by an official source as the "starting point" for the consideration of various viewpoints on a given issue (pp. 168-169).

In addition, it is important to note the serious time constraints that reporters face when producing stories, and the editorial constraints on the size of a given story. Both of these factors may discourage journalists from contacting sources who offer alternative viewpoints.

FIGURE 1

SIGNATURE MATRIX

Signature matrix for Drug News Discourse

PACKAGE	CORE FRAME	POSITION	METAPHORS	DEPICTIONS	CATCHPHRASES
War	(1) Government officials in the U.S. and Colombia try to convince citizens that warlike measures are needed to address a threat to national security from drugs and drug trafficking. (2) Other politicians agree that drugs and drug trafficking are bad, but disagree with current drug war tactics.	President Bush wants tougher drug laws, more prison beds, and military aid to help Colombia with its drug war. U.S. Democrats want to fight drugs, but also want more money for treatment, education, and prevention programs. President Barco of Colombia has declared war on drug barons. He wants to arrest them and extradite them to the U.S.	Drug war, anti-drug crusade, wave of drug-related terrorism, a dragnet for drug traffickers, anti-drug strike forces and task forces, boot camps for drug offenders, drug emergency, drug explosion, drugs invade the U.S., cocaine babies as war casualties.	Drug warriors work against tough odds to get traffickers and users put behind bars. Resisters who use drugs are immature, deviant, or anti-social. Other resisters are naive or misguided. Villains, be they people or drugs, are powerful and wicked. Victims include the young and poor people who are most vulnerable to drugs. They're often ignorant, passive, or helpless. They must be protected.	The drug menace, drugs as the gravest threat to society, the ravages of addiction, manning the front lines in the drug war, sealing our borders against drugs, drug-free zones around schools.
Resistance	The issue is how to demonstrate that drugs and drug users are not to blame for society's problems. The drug war violates personal freedoms.	The drug war should be scrapped. We'll never control drugs through law enforcement. The U.S. should send economic aid - not military aid - to drug growing countries.	The Bush drug war plan as a shiny new car with no engine under the hood and no fuel in the tank.	Resisters defy the drug war and fight for personal freedoms. They describe warriors as irrational, overly dogmatic moral zealots.	Drug testing is a witch hunt or an example of big brother, the war against pot is a waste of time and money, "who deals more coke - the CIA or Colombia?"
Treatment/Education/ Prevention	The issue is how to let people know that addiction is a disease that can be prevented and treated.	Treatment is better than law enforcement, when it comes to fighting drugs. Prevention and education programs are important, especially for children and teens.	Helping addicts is like cleaning up after an earthquake; people who are strong do what they can to help the victims.	Drug addicts are often victims of social forces beyond their control. We must understand their plight, treat their addiction, and prevent further addiction in society.	Community-wide alliances for drug abuse prevention, grass-roots efforts, just say no, down with dope and up with hope, prevention - not prisons.
Sickness/Social Illness	The issue is how to keep the plague of drug abuse from spreading throughout the normal or mainstream sectors of society.	Drug users and sellers are morally or spiritually weak. We must stop the spread of drug abuse through increased law enforcement and compulsory treatment for some offenders.	Drug epidemic, drug plague, drug and alcohol abuse as a social disaster, the spiritual malaise that leads to drug addiction.	Drug users and traffickers (resisters and villains) help to spread epidemics, infestations, and plagues. We must wipe out these social ills.	The crack crisis, steroids may destroy football.

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FIGURE 1 (continued)

PACKAGE	EXEMPLARS	VISUALIMAGES	ROOTS	CONSEQUENCES	APPEALS
War	Continued drug-related violence in North and Latin America. **LESSON:** We must step up law enforcement efforts against drug users and traffickers. Drug trafficking is a $300 billion a year industry. **LESSON:** Drug traffickers are very rich. It will take a strong commitment to win the drug war.	Photos of guns and drugs taken in raids, of bombing and assassination scenes, of soldiers and equipment used in the drug war, of George Bush holding a bag of crack supposedly bought across the street from the White House.	Drugs are to blame for most of our violent crimes. Differing opinions about the nature of drug problems make it tough to get agreement on the best ways to fight and finance the drug war. The U.S. is trying to oust Manuel Noriega because he's a drug trafficking dictator. (implicit) Drugs and drug traffickers are inherently evil. They're the reason for the drug war.	Drug policies that are too lax will lead to more drug abuse, trafficking, and violent crime. If drug arrests increase, we'll need more prison space to handle the influx of drug criminals. Colombia's crackdown on drug barons has led to a violent backlash, but it will help to stop the drug trade in the long run. The U.S. must make a better effort to oust Manuel Noriega. If we don't, freedom and democracy in Panama will suffer.	We must use every reasonable means to stamp out drugs and drug trafficking. Harsh punishment is necessary. Society's attitude toward drugs must change. We must all pull together to fight drugs. We need to have drug testing in the workplace.
Resistance	Pot and pot smokers are harmless. **LESSON:** There's no need for any crackdown on pot.	Photo of a pot smoking protester on Bascom Hill.	U.S. leaders don't want to confront the real causes of drug abuse; instead, they blame some "exotic other" for the problem. The Colombian cocaine problem is due, in part, to U.S. interventions in Latin America.	Warlike drug policies will only create more social conflict at home and abroad. Economic support for Andean nations could help to ease the U.S. cocaine problem.	Let's stop the drug war and find a more appropriate solution. Why not legalize drugs? We could cut down on drug-related crime by following that option.
Treatment/Education/ Prevention	Addictions are tough to overcome. **LESSON:** We must provide adequate funds for drug treatment. Children are drinking earlier - and heavier. **LESSON:** We need more drug abuse prevention efforts.	Photos of Bush and his aides showing concern for children and promoting drug prevention efforts.	Drug addiction is a disease caused by a variety of social problems, including low self-esteem and parental neglect.	If we fail to treat the root causes of drug abuse and addiction, we'll never solve these problems to any great extent.	Let's help addicts to get the help they need. Let's have more community-wide drug abuse education and prevention programs.
Sickness/Social Illness	Dangerous new drugs are spreading quickly through the U.S. **LESSON:** We must stop this epidemic before it reaches "our neighborhood."	Photo of Bush in a hospital ward for babies abandoned by drug-addicted mothers, photo of two young Colombian boys smoking pot.	Drug abuse and addiction are born of spiritual malaise or moral weakness.	If we don't quarantine drugs and drug offenders, the illness they bring will spread to other parts of society.	Americans need to know just how bad drug problems are. When they do, they'll help to stop the drug epidemic from spreading.

FIGURE 2
SAMPLE PAGE OF CONTENT CODE (IDEA ELEMENTS)

WAR (includes local law enforcement issues)

204. Undercover informants (not police officers) are an essential part of drug enforcement efforts.

205. Let's set up "drug-free zones" near schools.
(see 505/TREATMENT and 607/SICKNESS)

206. Any drug war plan should strike a balance between punitive measures... and treatment, education, and prevention measures. We should have adequate funding for the latter kind of measures.
(see 400/RESISTANCE and 500/TREATMENT)

TREATMENT

500. Treatment, education, and prevention programs are better tools for solving our drug problems than the warlike measures proposed by Bush and Thompson.
(see 206/WAR and 400/RESISTANCE)

501. Addiction is a disease. Addictions are sometimes very hard to overcome.

502. We must work to get adequate funding for drug treatment and treatment centers. Everyone should be able to get treatment, if need be.
(see 206/WAR, 400/RESISTANCE and 500/TREATMENT)

TABLE 1

Packages in Drug News Discourse
PRINCIPAL COMPONENT FACTOR ANALYSIS
USING ORTHOGONAL SOLUTION AND VARIMAX ROTATION

Resistance Package	**FAC 1**	**FAC 2**	**FAC 3**	**FAC 4**
Resist. Idea Elements	.862	.124	.109	.077
Resist. Catchphrases	.792	-.203	-.020	.051
Resist. Metaphors	.576	.373	.062	-.133
Treatment Package				
Treat. Catchphrases	-.061	.808	-.016	.133
Treat. Idea Elements	.118	.794	-.061	.013
War Package				
War Idea Elements	.011	-.035	.852	.001
War Catchphrases	.030	-.175	.751	.057
War Metaphors	.140	.423	.619	-.017
Sickness Package				
Sick. Idea Elements	.034	.107	-.053	.870
Sick. Metaphors	-.096	.149	.160	.664
Sick. Catchphrases	.080	-.105	-.042	.641
Eigenvalue	2.16	1.70	1.58	1.43
Variances	19.7%	15.4%	14.4%	13.0%

Total % of Variance Accounted For: 62.5 %

n = 202

TABLE 2

MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

	DEPENDENT VARIABLES (PACKAGES)							
	WAR		TREATMENT		RESISTANCE		SICKNESS	
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	Beta/Correl.		Beta/Correl.		Beta/Correl.		Beta/Correl.	
GEOGRAPHIC ORIGIN (dummy variable = Colombia)								
U.S. vs. Colombia	-.283	-.218^a	.097	.225	.106	.096	.120	.050
Other vs. Colombia	-.088	-.011	-.004	-.109	.083	-.012	.079	.028
ADJUSTED R^2	.055		.041		.001		.0003	
AUTHOR OF ARTICLE (dummy variable = Wire Service)								
Wisc. St. Journ. vs. Wire Service	-.022	-.103	.010	.108	.192	.273^a	-.026	.029
Other vs. Wire Service	.003	-.060	.060	.086	-.041	-.088	-.093	-.074
ADJUSTED R^2	.001		.001		.061		.0002	
SOURCE								
Resister	.021	.049	-.100	-.073	.241	.298^c	-.065	-.056
Treatment	-.002	-.015	.354	.363^c	-.017	.039	.101	.133
Foreign Government	.103	.267	-.048	-.188	-.029	-.081	-.005	-.043
U.S. Federal Government	.401	.267^c	.032	-.045	.036	-.019	-.053	-.047
Other	.056	.098	.048	-.039	.073	-.014	.041	.026
Unattributed	.176	.282^b	.021	.031	.159	.124^a	.094	.088
State or Local Government	.352	.118^c	.244	.259^b	.077	.155	.085	.077
(Constant)	.950		.155		.101		.397	
TOTAL ADJUSTED R^2	.257		.190		.120		.005	

n = 202

^{a} = sig .05
^{b} = sig .01
^{c} = sig .001

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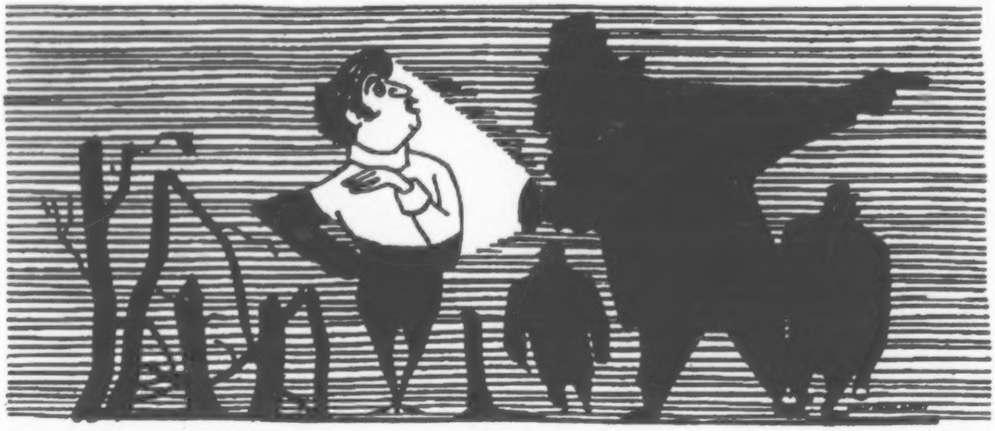
Deviates Defoliated

Prancing Park Pruned; Play Periled



Headline and Bob McCausland illustration from page 49 of the July 1, 1969, *Seattle Post Intelligencer*. The story that followed was a shorter version of a *New York Times* story by David Bird about neighborhood vigilantes who cut down all the trees and brush in a Queens park in an effort to drive away homosexuals using the park at night.

Deviates Defoliated:

Lesbians and Gay Men Break into Mainstream Publicity, 1969

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This paper has been prepared for submission to
The Lesbian, Gay and Family Diversity Interest Group, Association for Education in Journalism and
Mass Communication, for consideration for presentation to the 1993 Convention.

Abstract

Deviates Defoliated:
Lesbians and Gay Men Break into Mainstream Publicity, 1969

In June 1969, gay men and lesbians fought back when New York City police raided the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar. This became known as the Stonewall Riots, which marked the birth of the modern gay and lesbian rights movement. This study examined how the mainstream print media covered the gay and lesbian minority during the year of the Stonewall Riots.

Using framing theory, this study examined articles about homosexuality in *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Look*, the *New York Times* and the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. It argued that the underlying assumptions and characteristics of news influenced the framing of this issue. This framing characterized gay men and lesbians as a group of maladjusted men and women who had developed a lifestyle that was a potential threat to society and therefore a problem for that society -- a mental health problem, a behavioral problem, a police problem, a political problem and a prison problem.

INTRODUCTION

Just before midnight on the last Friday of June 1969, two detectives, two patrolmen and two policewomen conducted a raid on the Stonewall Inn, one of New York City's "largest, most popular, and longest lived gay bars." The raid was for the illegal sale of alcohol, but men dressed as women were also arrested. When a "dyke" fought to get away from police, the crowd that had gathered outside the inn began to get ugly. First coins, then beer bottles, then bricks were thrown at the police, who barricaded themselves inside the inn. For 45 minutes the crowd fought to get in while the police held them off until reinforcements arrived.[1]

Demonstrations continued for the next two nights.[2] A month later hundreds marched as part of a gay power rally from Washington Square to the Stonewall Inn.[3] A year later "thousands and thousands and thousands" marched up New York City's Sixth Avenue from Sheridan Square to Central Park.[4] Every year since in an increasing number of cities across the United States, parades and rallies commemorate the day gay men and lesbians stood up to police harassment at the Stonewall Inn.[5]

Like most such historical turning points, the Stonewall Riots and their aftermath did not spring fully formed. A long history of activity preceded them.[6] In *Before*

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[1] Howard Smith, "Full Moon Over the Stonewall," *Village Voice*, 3 July 1969, 1, 25, 29; and Lucian Truscott IV, "Gay Power Comes to Sheridan Square," *Village Voice*, 3 July 1969, 1, 18.

[2] Truscott.

[3] Jonathan Black, "Gay Power Hits Back," *Village Voice*, 31 July 1969, 1, 3, 28.

[4] Jonathan Black, "A Happy Birthday for Gay Liberation," *Village Voice*, 2 July 1970, 1, 58.

[5] John D'Emilio, "Gay Politics and Community in San Francisco Since World War II," *Hidden from History*, eds. Martin Bauml Duberman, Martha Vicinus and George Chauncey, Jr. (New York: NAL--Penguin, 1989), 466.

[6] Ibid., 466-468; See also Andrea Weiss and Greta Schiller, *Before Stonewall: The Making of a Gay and Lesbian Community* (Naiad Press: 1988); and John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940 - 1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

Stonewall, the book that rounded out the Emmy-award winning documentary of the same name, Craig Rodwell recalled that Friday night. "There was no one thing special about it. It was just everything coming together, one of those moments in history where, if you were there, you just knew that this is IT [sic]. This is what we've been waiting for."[7]

One of the major successes of the pre-Stonewall gay rights movement was the "breakthrough into mainstream publicity ... As much publicity as possible, that was the whole idea, to crack that shield of invisibility that had always made it difficult to get our message across," Barbara Gittings recalled in *Before Stonewall*.[8] "By the early Sixties, homosexuality was discussed publicly by religious, legal and medical experts," Andrea Weiss and Greta Schiller wrote, and in the pages of popular publications such as *Time*, *Life* and *Look*, as well as the *New York Times*.[9]

It is the nature of that discussion that is of interest here. Larry Gross wrote that how the media cover an issue may influence public perceptions of, and reactions to, that issue, particularly when it concerns a group about which the public has little first-hand knowledge, such as gay men and lesbians.[10] It is the purpose of this study to examine how the mainstream print media covered the gay and lesbian minority at the dawn of the modern gay rights movement, which is here defined as the calendar year of 1969, the year of the Stonewall Riots.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Of all the events and activities that take place each day, only a few can make the news. As a result, journalists have created a set of conventions that help define news and determine how it is selected and presented. Richard Ericson, Patricia Barnak and Janet

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[7] Weiss and Schiller, 67.

[8] Ibid., 56.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Larry Gross, "The Ethics of (Mis)representation," *Image Ethics*, eds. Larry Gross, John Stuart Katz and Jay Ruby (New York: Oxford UP, 1988), 190-91.

Chan called these conventions "a vocabulary of precedents: what previous exemplars tell them should be done in the present instance."[11] Todd Gitlin, calling attention to these journalists' routines, wrote: "These routines are structured in the ways journalists are socialized from childhood, and then trained, recruited, assigned, edited, rewarded, and promoted on the job; they decisively shape the way in which news is defined, events are considered newsworthy, and 'objectivity' is secured."[12]

Objectivity has become central to any judgment of performance of the news media and its reporters and editors by both professionals and the public.[13] Mitchell Stephens defined objectivity as a term journalists use "to express their commitment not only to impartiality but to reflecting the world as it is, without bias or distortion of any sort."[14] As Gitlin implied, journalists' routines are designed to secure, or at least attempt to secure, this Holy Grail of journalism.[15]

However, Herbert Gans wrote this quest, too, is doomed to failure. Objectivity is not possible, he said, because reporters cannot proceed without values.[16] Robert Karl Manoff and Michael Schudson wrote it is not possible for reporters to "simply and successfully mirror the real world."[17] Tom Koch put it this way: "By being involved in an event -- even as a recorder -- we influence it."[18]

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[11] Richard V. Ericson, Patricia M. Baranek and Janet B. L. Chan, *Visualizing Deviance: A Study of News Organizations* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 348.

[12] Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1980), 11-12.

[13] See Denis McQuail, "From Bias to Objectivity: Competing Paradigms for News Analysis and a Pluralistic Alternative," *Studies in Communication*, vol. 3 (Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1986), 2.

[14] Mitchell Stephens, *A History of News: From the Drum to the Satellite* (New York: Viking 1988), 264.

[15] Tom Koch, *The News As Myth: Fact and Context in Journalism* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 20.

[16] Herbert J. Gans, *Deciding What's News* (1979; reprint, New York: Vantage, 1980), 39-40.

Gaye Tuchman argued that the journalists' routines followed in the attempt to secure objectivity can be seen as a strategic ritual designed to protect journalists from criticism.[19] Tuchman wrote a newspaper story is a collection of "facts," which are assessed and structured by the reporter. In addition to verifying the facts, the reporter follows four "strategic procedures" as part of this ritual of objectivity. These are the presentation of conflicting possibilities, the presentation of supporting evidence, the judicious use of direct quotations as a further form of supporting evidence, and the structuring of the information in a sequence that reflects its importance.[20]

Because it is not possible to report facts that are not mediated by bias and assumption,[21] and because objectivity can then be construed as a set of norms devised for journalists to follow, Allan Rachlin argued objectivity is a social construction. Journalists cannot stand apart from their culture, he said, they are immersed in it, and their work is shaped by it.[22]

Framing theorists offer some insight into the way the news media construct our view of the world. Tuchman presented the idea of news as a frame when she used the metaphor of a window framing our view of the world, with its size, number of panes, clarity, and view all influencing what we see.[23] Drawing upon work by Erving Goffman, Tuchman characterized frames as the organization of strips, which Goffman defined as arbitrary slices cut from ongoing activity.[24] Therefore, Tuchman maintained, how the news is framed, or organized, is actually the act of constructing reality. In other words, the way the news is framed provides one view of an event out of many possibilities. In the absence of knowledge of other possibilities, this one view becomes reality. The act of making news, then, becomes the act of constructing reality rather than providing a true picture of reality.[25]

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[17] Robert Karl Manoff and Michael Schudson, "Reading the News," *Reading the News*, eds. Robert Karl Manoff and Michael Schudson (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 6.

[18] Koch, 20.

[19] Gaye Tuchman, "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity," *American Journal of Sociology* 77 (Jan. 1972): 660.

[20] Ibid., 663-671.

[21] Koch, 20.

[22] Allan Rachlin, *News as Hegemonic Reality: American Political Culture and the Framing of News Accounts* (New York: Praeger, 1988), 11.

Mark Fishman examined reporters' beats and found this traditional journalists' routine defines the world in a specific way. A beat has a history, is assigned, and involves a domain outside the newsroom -- for example, the city hall beat.[26] The use of the beat, Fishman wrote, defines the world of possible news, which is progressively narrowed to provide a uniform view[27] that deliberately "contains procedures for not knowing certain things."[28] For example, Fishman cited the case of a woman who complained of police harassment at a budget hearing. Because the reporters viewed the complaint as not applicable to a story about a budget hearing, they took no notes and the woman's complaint was not reported. It was a nonevent.[29] Such routine news coverage, Fishman wrote, "legitimates the existing political order by disseminating bureaucratic idealizations of the world and by filtering out troublesome perceptions of events."[30] In other words, how routine news is framed serves to legitimate the status quo and reinforce contemporary social arrangements.[31]

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[23] Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality* (New York: Free, 1978), 1.

[24] Ibid., 192.

[25] Ibid., 12.

[26] Mark Fishman, *Manufacturing News* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980), 28.

[27] Ibid., 16-17

[28] Ibid., 32.

[29] Ibid., 78-80

[30] Ibid., 154.

In his study of the news coverage of the Students for a Democratic Society, Todd Gitlin identified a number of framing devices used, which changed over time. The early devices included marginalization (demonstrators as unrepresentative or deviant), polarization (balancing the antiwar movement against ultra-right groups), trivialization (making light of various aspects of the movement), emphasis on internal dissension, and disparagement (of the movement's size and effectiveness). The later devices included reliance on statements from official government sources, attention to right-wing opposition, emphasis on violence (in the demonstrations) and on communist connections, and the use of deligitimizing quotation marks (e.g., "peace march").

"Some of this framing," Gitlin wrote, "can be attributed to traditional assumptions in news treatment: news concerns the *event*, not the underlying conditions; the *person*, not the group; *conflict*, not consensus; the fact that *advances the story*, not the one that explains it." But other aspects influence the framing as well, Gitlin added, to include the use of beats and their reliance upon official sources, and the tendency of reporters and editors to reproduce the dominant ideological assumptions prevailing in society.[32]

The heavy reliance on official sources by reporters and editors was documented in a 1973 study by Leon Sigal[33] and was reconfirmed 10 years later by Jane Delano Brown, Carl R. Bybee, Stanley T. Wearden and Dulcie Murdock Straughan. They commented that such dependence upon governmental and elite sources limits "the diversity of information available to the public."[34] Lance Bennett was also critical, arguing reliance upon official and elite sources results in mass media that simply pass on a "daily garble" of confusing images.[35] Allan Rachlin's study of two international news stories led him to conclude this reliance on official pronouncements and interpretations has resulted in an "American, capitalist filter" that colors journalism and presents a world "shaped more by images and understanding originating in an American social/political/economic ecology than by the events themselves."[36]

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[31] Tuchman, *Making News*, 5.

[32] Gitlin, 27-28.

[33] Leon V. Sigal, *Reporters and Officials: The Organization and Politics of Newsmaking* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Company, 1973), 190.

Bennett, in his discussion of how the media frame the news, continues this theme. "The news gives people a *me-first* view of the world, in which *my* well-being, *my* group and *my* country are emphasized over social realities that differ from one's own. Even the *two-sided* format used in most reporting usually offers one side that is much *closer to home* than the other."[37] Like Tuchman, Bennett is concerned people too easily assume news stories are a true picture of reality rather than one of many possible constructions of that reality, and that they respond to that construction. "Even, and perhaps especially, those images with the most dubious links to reality can generate actions in the real world, actions that have real effects: the election of corrupt leaders, the acceptances of oppressive laws or ideas, the labeling of social groups, support for wars, or tolerance of chronic social and economic problems."[38]

Framing theorists make a strong case that how news is framed--what is asked and not asked, what is included and what is excluded, who is asked and who is not, what is assumed and not assumed--serves to construct or define a version of reality for the audience rather than a true picture of reality. Since these constructions are subject to varying influences and can be changed, it is important not only to acknowledge their presence but to define them and to study how they are constructed.

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[34] Jane Delano Brown, Carl R. Bybee, Stanley T. Wearden and Dulcie Murdock Straughan, "Invisible Power: Newspaper News Sources and the Limits of Diversity," *Journalism Quarterly* 64 (1987): 45-54.

[35] W. Lance Bennett, *News: The Politics of Illusion*, 2nd ed. (New York: Longman, 1988), xii-xiv.

[36] Rachlin, 127.

[37] Bennett, 27.

[38] Ibid., 73.

Such research examining the framing devices used by the mass media in reporting on the gay and lesbian minority is relatively sparse and primarily theoretical in nature.

Gary Atkins and William Rivers identified gay men and lesbians as one of the minority groups being discriminated against by the media. Such discrimination, they wrote, takes the form of neglect, or distortion through stereotyping.[39] Larry Gross argued that one of the conventions of objectivity, presenting both sides of an issue, is fatally flawed because the definition of the extremes will determine where the center will appear to be. Gross observed the apparent center in the coverage of the gay and lesbian minority is a lot further to the right than to the left, "which puts the 'objectively balanced' mainstream clearly to the right of center."[40] Thomas Waugh explained: "How many times, for example, has the media blackout been lifted briefly only to have us [gay men and lesbians] debate our right to live and love with, at best, apologists for discrimination, and, at worst, proponents of concentration camps and even capital punishment?"[41]

Gross wrote groups at the bottom of various power hierarchies, for example gay men and lesbians, will be kept in their place through relative invisibility. When such groups do attain visibility, the manner of that representation will reflect the biases of those who define the public agenda. These elites, Gross wrote, are ". . . (mostly) white, (mostly) middle-aged, (mostly) male, (mostly) middle and upper-middle class, and entirely heterosexual (at least in public)." In addition, the mass media will be most effective in cultivating the images of groups of which the public has little first-hand knowledge.[42] Gross argued: "The mass media play a major role in this process of social definition, and rarely a positive one. In the absence of adequate information in their non-mediated environment, most people, gay or straight, may have little choice other than to accept the narrow and negative stereotypes they encounter as being representative of gay people."[43]

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[39] Gary Atkins and William Rivers, *Reporting with Understanding* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1987), 213.

[40] Larry Gross, "Out of the Mainstream: Sexual Minorities and the Mass Media," *Remote Control: Television, Audiences, and Cultural Power*, eds. Ellen Seiter, Hans Borchers, Gabriele Kreutzner, and Eva-Maria Warth (New York: Routledge, 1989), 134.

[41] Thomas Waugh, "Lesbian and Gay Documentary: Minority Self-Imaging, Oppositional Film Practice, and the Question of Image Ethics," *Image Ethics*, eds. Larry Gross, John Stuart Katz and Jay Ruby (New York: Oxford UP, 1988), 249.

This process is amplified, as Francis FitzGerald wrote, because "gay people [have] no distinguishing marks, no permanent badges of color, class, or accent. . . . gay people, black or white, men or women, [are] invisible to others as long as they [want] to be."[44] This relative invisibility and the fact gay men and lesbians must acknowledge their homosexuality through a process of discovery and acceptance create a rare, if not unique, communications situation. First, the media often provide most of the information about homosexuality during this self-discovery process. A study by Sean O'Neil concluded, "Mass media were most often the means by which respondents could legitimize and learn about their experiences [gay], even though the mass media usually presented negative images."[45] Second, the mass media are the means through which most people get much of their information about the gay and lesbian minority. As Gross wrote, "By definition, portrayals of minority groups and 'deviants' will be relatively distant from the real lives of a large majority of viewers."[46]

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[42] Gross, "Out of the Mainstream," 131.

[43] Gross, "The Ethics of (Mis)representation," 195.

[44] Frances FitzGerald, *Cities on a Hill* (New York: Simon, 1986), 31.

[45] Sean O'Neil, "The Role of the Mass Media and Other Socialization Agents in the Identity Formation of Gay Males," *Studies in Communication*, vol. 1, ed. Sari Thomas (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Publishing, 1984), 205.

[46] Gross, "The Ethics of (Mis)representation," 190.

Gross continued, "gay people are portrayed and used in news and dramatic media in ways which serve to reinforce rather than to challenge the prevailing negative images." This continued depiction of gay men and lesbians as abnormal while suppressing images that are positive, or even simply unexceptional, maintains the idea gays are a threat to the moral order.[47] In other words, the media's depiction of gay men and lesbians reinforces societal prejudice, institutionalizing it in a way not unlike the military's policy banning them from service.[48]

Such institutionalized prejudice, it is argued, keeps the gay and lesbian minority on the fringe, or marginal edge, of society. Its members are often denied full participation in society's economic, political and social structures.[49]

A case study by Howard Voland examining the mainstream print media's coverage of the issue of the suitability of gay men and lesbians for U.S. military service argued that by reinforcing societal prejudice against gay men and lesbians the media contributed to the continued marginalization of the gay and lesbian minority.[50] During the period examined[51] it identified five main framing devices used by the mainstream print media: gay men and lesbians as different, gays and lesbians as victims, gays and lesbians as sexual deviants, gays and lesbians as immoral, and gay rights as a liberal cause.[52] It argued further that:

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[47] Ibid., 196.

[48] See Kate Dyer, ed., *Gays in Uniform: The Pentagon's Secret Reports* (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1990).

[49] See for example, Neil Miller, *In Search of Gay America: Women and Men in a Time of Change* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1989), 10. But the concept of marginality is poorly defined. It is still evolving from roots in both Marxism and sociology. It has only recently been used, as defined here, to describe the position of the gay and lesbian minority in American society. For a further discussion of the concept, see Gino Germani, *Marginality* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1980); and Edward Sagarin, *Deviants and Deviance: An Introduction to the Study of Disvalued People and Behavior* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), 34-40.

[50] Howard M. Voland, "The Framing of an Issue: A Case Study of Minority News Coverage," (Thesis, U of Washington, 1991), 110.

[51] Primarily the period between September 1989 to April 15, 1991. Ibid., 45-55.

> It is the structure of the media and the set of journalistic practices "not reducible to individuals" which have such an influence on how this issue was framed. It is the assumption that news is about conflict, events, the individual; that it needs narrative at the expense of explanation, to present two sides, to quote official and elite sources, and supporting "facts." These assumptions are at the heart of the journalistic conventions that have had such a great influence on the way this issue was framed.[53]

James Chesebro wrote, "the issue of homosexuality is predominantly a communication problem, and that a humane understanding and resolution of this issue is to be found in established frameworks, methods, principles, and perspectives of the discipline of communication."[54]

In summary, it is argued that the news media are active participants in the construction of the way society views the gay and lesbian minority. Underlying assumptions about the nature of news and the use of journalists' routines influence the framing devices used by the news media. These reflect contemporary social standards and legitimize the status quo, a status quo that marginalizes the gay and lesbian minority.

The purpose of this study is to examine these concepts in relation to the print media coverage at the dawn of the modern gay rights movement, which is defined here as the calendar year of 1969. How was the news coverage of the gay and lesbian minority framed during this early period? How did underlying assumptions about the nature of news and the use of traditional journalists' routines influence that framing?

METHODS

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[52] Ibid., 73-85.

[53] Ibid., 110-111.

[54] James W. Chesebro, "Introduction," *Gayspeak: Gay Male & Lesbian Communication*, ed. James W. Chesebro (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1981), xiii.

The approach chosen to answer these questions was historical and qualitative, an approach that Gitlin characterized as "the qualitative, exhaustive approach to news history."[55] It is a method that lends itself to the search for the often-subtle framing devices and the assumptions and journalists' routines that influence their use.

Because this study sought to examine the framing devices used by the print news media at the beginning of the modern gay rights movement, the time period selected was the calendar year of 1969, the year of the Stonewall Riots, which are considered by many to mark the birth of the modern gay rights movement.

It was beyond the resources of this study to examine all the news media in the United States; therefore, it was decided to study the mainstream print media for which indexes could be found for that period, *The New York Times Index*[56] and *The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*. In addition, every issue of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (*P-I*), a Hearst newspaper, was surveyed by scanning the headlines of all news stories in 1969. A complete listing of all the articles examined for this study can be found in Appendix 1 at the end.

The *P-I* was selected for several reasons. First, it would to give some balance to the *New York Times*, which is heavily studied both because of its importance and because it is indexed. Second, relatively few articles were found through the two indexes and the *P-I* would increase the number. Third, the *New York Times* served a city with a large and, for that time, active gay and lesbian population while Seattle's gay and lesbian population was much smaller and less active. The *P-I* would help to balance the sample, and allow for some comparisons. Fourth, the *P-I* was being surveyed as part of a different study and that survey offered the opportunity to economically gather information for this study as well.

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[55] Gitlin, 303. For a greater discussion of this method, see Gitlin, 303-305; and Rachlin, 141-142.

[56] Actually the more detailed *A Gay News Chronology January 1969--May 1975: Index and Abstracts of Articles from The New York Times* (Arno Press (A New York Times Company): New York, 1975) was used. It was found to be more complete. For example the *New York Times* articles reporting on the Stonewall Riots were not listed in *The New York Times Index* under homosexuality, gay or lesbian but were in the chronology.

This study looked for characteristic framing devices common to much of the mainstream news coverage of the gay and lesbian minority in 1969, and it looked for the common journalists' routines and assumption about news that influenced the use of these framing devices. Not every device will appear in every article, nor will a single appearance in an article indicate a framing device common in the coverage.

ANALYSIS

Using the *Reader's Guide*, seven articles were identified from mainstream magazines. One was from *Newsweek*, which focused on the relationship between the gay and lesbian minority and the police. Four were from *Time*, although the last three of these were tied together in one issue. The first article was primarily a report on the release of a National Institute of Health study on homosexuality, which became know as the Hooker Report because its chair was U.C.L.A. psychologist Evelyn Hooker. The other three made up a lengthy overview of homosexuality. The last two articles were from *Look* and were tied together in the same issue. The first was a photo essay on the faces of the actors portraying the characters in the movie *The Boys in the Band* with a brief discussion of each character in the movie. The second was a one-page overview of homosexuality.

Using the index, 35 articles and 13 letters were identified from the *New York Times*. Fourteen of these articles, five foreign and nine domestic, were news stories about actual or proposed changes to laws affecting gay men and lesbians, either through legislative action or through the courts. Another 14 dealt with law enforcement issues. Of these, four were concerned with homosexual activity in prison, three reported on the Stonewall Riots, and seven were concerned with the vandalism of a park in Queens by a group of vigilantes attempting to drive away gay men. Two of the letters also concerned this issue. Two articles concerned censorship of the movie *The Killing of Sister George*, which had a lesbian theme. One was a book review of two books about homosexuality.

One of the letters concerned this and included a response from the reviewer. One was a review of a recording of the gay-themed play *The Boys in the Band* by a gay writer. Another was a long commentary by the same writer on the unfair depiction of gay men and lesbians in the arts. This sparked 10 of the letters. One article was a short piece that noted a movie ad for the upcoming movie version of *The Boys in the Band* would use the term "homosexual" for the first time. The last one was a lengthy overview article on lesbianism in the "food, fashions, family, furnishings" section.

The search identified 46 articles and no letters from the *P-I*. *P-I* articles were selected if they mentioned or had anything to do with homosexuality. A number of these only had a passing reference to it, for example Hugh Hefner denying he was a "fag,"[57] and probably would not have been listed under an index heading of homosexuality. But even a few of the *New York Times* articles had only a single mention of homosexuality.[58] In the pages of the *P-I*, a local gay and lesbian population does not appear to exist. Other than arts reviews and commentary, only two articles were local in nature. One was a three-part series on the local availability of pornography in which homosexuality was only mentioned briefly in the first one. The other was a short news story about nine men already in jail facing morals charges. Of the remaining articles, 13 were reviews or discussion of movies, books, fashions, or figures in the art world. In many, homosexuality was only mentioned briefly. Twenty-three more were syndicated columns or features, of which 12 were Ann Landers columns. A number of these discussed homosexuality in depth, but many more gave it only a passing reference. Another short article was in the Sunday *Parade* section announcing a "Homo" study in San Francisco. The remaining seven were all provided by the news services. One of these was part of a series on the "new permissiveness," which gave homosexuality two short mentions. Two dealt with federal hearings on prison conditions and focused on the problem of situational homosexuality in prison. One was a shorter version of the first *New York Times* article on the park in Queens, but it had a local graphic by Bob McCausland to illustrate it. That graphic with its *P-I* headline is reproduced on the cover of this study. The other three were all found in the *P-I*'s "Quickly" column, which were short news briefs from the wire services.

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[57] Ivor Key, "Playboy of the Midwestern World," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer Northwest Today*, 6 April 1969, 10.

[58] For example, "Liberals Oppose Abortion and Marijuana Laws," *New York Times*, 3 March 1969, 40.

A detailed reading of these articles revealed four major framing devices common to much of the coverage. They were homosexuality-as-a-problem, homosexuality-as-a-maladjustment, homosexuality-as-a-threat-to-society, and homosexuality-as-a-lifestyle.

Homosexuality as the problem. After reading "dozens of stories about gays and lesbians from a variety of newspapers" published between 1969 and 1989, Roger Simpson wrote "a vivid impression prevails that newspapers have trouble seeing homosexuality as anything but a problem."[59] Certainly that was the dominant framing device used in the coverage studied here. Ann Landers responded to an 18-year-old that said she was sick about being a lesbian by noting, "Many people with your problem lead useful, productive lives."[60] This clearly defines homosexuality as a problem with the inference is that many with that problem do not lead useful and productive lives. In the articles studied here, homosexuality was formulated as a mental health problem, a behavioral problem, a police problem, a prison problem and a political problem. The few survey articles of homosexuality, primarily the longest *Time* article[61] with its two companion articles[62] and an article on lesbians in the *New York Times*,[63] of which about the first third also appeared in the *P-I*,[64] raised most of these aspects of this framing device. Most of the rest of coverage tended to raise one or two of them.

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[59] Roger Simpson. "Papers Made Progress. But 'Problem' Prevails." *Alternatives: Gays & Lesbians in the Newsroom* (American Society of Newspaper Editors. Human Resources Committee Report. 1990) 63.

[60] Ann Landers. "She's 18 And In Between." *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. 30 Jan. 1969. 11.

[61] "The Homosexual: Newly Visible. Newly Understood." *Time*. 31 Oct. 1969. 66.

[62] "Four Lives in the Gay World." *Time*. 31 Oct. 1969. 62; and "A Discussion: Are Homosexuals Sick?" *Time*. 31 Oct. 1969. 66-67.

[63] Enid Nemy. "The Women Homosexual: More Assertive. Less Willing to Hide." *The New York Times*. 17 Nov. 1969. 62.

That longest *Time* article and its two companion articles are a good example of all the different ways the homosexuality-as-a-problem framing device was formulated. It concluded with this statement of the overall problem of homosexuality: "The challenge to American society is simultaneously to devise civilized ways of discouraging the condition [of homosexuality] and to alleviate the anguish of those who cannot be helped, or do not wish to be." In arriving at that conclusion, these articles discussed all the different ways homosexuality-as-a-problem was formulated. As a mental health problem, it was raised often, but the best example is the almost two-page discussion in one of the companion articles among eight "experts," who tried to answer the question, "Are Homosexuals Sick?"[65]

As a behavioral problem, it was suggested in a number of ways. For example, the article stated that the "homosexual subculture" is "shallow and unstable," and suggested gay men and lesbians are insecure, promiscuous, and unhappy. Promiscuity, as behavioral pattern, is associated with gay men a number of times in other articles in this study. The article classified homosexuals into subgroups: blatant, the secret lifer, the desperate, the adjusted, the bisexual, and the situational-experimental. Through these classifications, the article insinuated that some behavior was more acceptable than other. For example, it commented that some blatants behave "the way they think gay people are supposed to behave," while the adjusted "lead relatively conventional lives," and the desperate "are likely to haunt public toilets." All this serves to suggest that there is a problem with the behavior of at least some gay men and lesbians.

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[64] Enid Nemy. "Lesbians Fight Back." *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 23 November 1969, 21.

[65] "A Discussion: Are Homosexuals Sick?"

As a police problem, it was suggested through a discussion of the Stonewall Riots, which was brought up this way: "Hurling rocks and bottles and wielding a parking meter that had been wrenched out of the sidewalk, homosexuals rioted last summer in New York's Greenwich Village after police closed one of the city's 50 all-gay bars and clubs on an alleged liquor-law violation." Another example: "In large cities, homosexuals have reached tacit agreements with police that give them the *de facto* right to their own social life." The conclusion was obvious. The gay and lesbian minority created special problems for law enforcement.

As a political problem, it was suggested this way: "Pressure from militant self-styled 'homophiles' has forced political candidates views about homosexuality into recent election campaigns in New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles." Another example: "Homosexual have picketed businesses, the White House and the Pentagon, demanding an end to job discrimination and the right to serve in the Army without a dishonorable discharge if their background is discovered." The obvious conclusion was that another minority was now making political waves. This was also raised when it cited the Hooker Report, which "urged legalization of private homosexual acts between adults who agree to them." In 1969, only Illinois did not prohibit such acts. Connecticut voted that year to repeal its laws banning such acts effective in 1971.[66]

As a prison problem, it was only raised in a brief discussion of situational homosexuality, which occurred, for example, in prisons when "no women are available. Thus the men frequently turned to homosexual contacts, some in order to reassert their masculinity and recapture a feeling of dominance." As a problem, this was discussed more extensively in other articles.

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[66] "Homosexuality: Coming to Terms," *Time*, 24 Oct. 1969, 82.

While this particular article was a comprehensive example of the homosexuality-as-the-problem framing device, elements of this framing device were found in most of the rest of the articles of any depth examined in this study.

Homosexuality-as-a-mental-health problem was raised in most of the articles that attempted to take an overall look at homosexuality. It was a primary focus of the earlier *Time*[67] article, which was a mainly a report on the Hooker study. Among other things, it stated: "Psychiatric treatment permits about 30% of adults who seek help to enjoy a normal sex life." It was less emphasized in the overview article in *Look*,[68] but it was nevertheless raised in a discussion of psychiatric treatments of gay men and lesbians. In the *New York Times* coverage, it was raised most forcefully in the previously mentioned long article about lesbians. For example, it quoted Dr. Charles W. Socarides: "It [homosexuality] is quite a severe illness but amenable to therapy in a great majority of cases."[69] This quote came later in the story and therefore did not appear in the shorter *P-I* version, but the issue was still raised this way in the *P-I*: "Socarides, who has treated many homosexuals, ..."[70] It again appeared in a *New York Times* book review of two books, one by Socarides, both of which were cited as maintaining that homosexuality was psychoanalytically treatable.[71] In the *P-I*, it was raised in a column on psychiatry headlined "Lesbianism May Not Stem From Oedipal Conflict."[72] A series about parents and teenagers devoted most of one installment to homosexuality and discussed the prognosis for treatment.[73] A column on psychology was devoted to this issue and was headlined "Is Homosexuality a Disease or Not?"[74] Ann Landers also raised the mental health framing device in the *P-I* by recommending therapy or psychiatric help.[75]

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[67] "Homosexuality: Coming to Terms."

[68] Jack Star, "A Changing View of Homosexuality?" *Look*, 2 Dec. 1969, 68.

[69] Nemy, "The Women Homosexual: More Assertive, Less Willing to Hide."

[70] Nemy, "Lesbians Fight Back;" and Nemy, "The Women Homosexual: More Assertive, Less Willing to Hide."

[71] Gerald Walker in a review of *The Gay World* by Martin Hoffman and *The Overt Homosexual* by Charles W. Socarides, *The New York Time Book Review*, 9 March 1969, section 7, 30.

[72] Marjorie Scarlet, "Lesbianism May Not Stem From Oedipal Conflict," *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 27 July 1969, 21.

Most of these articles cited sources refuting the idea that homosexuality is a mental illness. They often quoted other professionals and occasionally gay men and lesbians. This was in keeping with the journalistic norms of objectivity discussed previously. Both sides of a question were discussed, for example the one posed by *P-I*'s psychology column "Is Homosexuality a Disease or Not?" Then the reader was left to draw their own conclusions. Regardless of those conclusions, the idea that homosexuality could be a mental illness was raised, and the problem of whether it was a mental illness became a framing device in these stories.

The framing device of homosexuality-as-a-behavioral problem surfaced in a variety of ways in the other articles. Perhaps the most interesting example was the news coverage of what happened to a park in Queens. It had apparently become a cruising ground for gay men looking for sexual partners, who probably engaged in sexual activity with them in the park at night. This is never actually said in the six articles, two letter, and one editorial in the *New York Times*, nor in the one article in the *P-I* (which was a shorter version of the first *New York Times* article), nor in the *Newsweek* article[76]. *Newsweek* said the park was becoming a "homosexual preserve," the *New York Times* called it "a haven for homosexuals"[77] and said "that the trees shielded the activities of homosexuals,"[78] and the

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[73] Haim G. Ginott. "Deviant Child -- an Uncomfortable Fact That Must Be Faced." *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. 23 Sept. 1969. 14.

[74] Lawrence Massett. "Is Homosexuality a Disease or Not?" *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. 21 Dec. 1969. 18.

[75] See for example the Dear Ann Landers columns: "She's 18 And In Between." *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. 30 Jan. 1969. 11; and "17-year-old Has a Problem -- He Doesn't Like Girls." *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. 18 April 1969. 18.

[76] "Policing the Third Sex." *Newsweek*. 27 Oct. 1969. 76. 81.

[77] David Bird. "Queens Resident Says the Police Stood By as Park Trees Were Cut." *New York Times*. 2 July 1969. 38.

New York Times[79] and the *P-I*[80] called it a "rendezvous for homosexuals." Neighborhood vigilantes began patrolling the park at night to harass gay men because they were "concerned for the safety of the women and children."[81] However, over time it was reported this was not successful, so one night an unidentified group cut down all the trees and shrubbery in the park. The news coverage focused on the vigilante action and the police non-action. But underlying all the coverage was the premise that none of this would have happened if hadn't been for the gays. A witness reported the tree cutting to policemen, but was told by them "that the citizens of the community 'were doing a job which the police were not able to do to the satisfaction of the community."[82] But as one local woman noted: "They [the vigilantes] should be ashamed of themselves committing vandalism. They say they were protecting mothers and children? Nonsense. What mothers and children are out at 1 o-clock in the morning?"[83] What they were trying to do was change the behavior of the gay men, the "job" the police were not able to do. As a *New York Times* editorial noted, "There are laws against public nuisances and indecent behavior which, if warranted, could have been invoked in this case."[84]

Other than the example above, this framing device was in little evidence in the *P-I*. Other examples from the *New York Times* included a report on Amsterdam that discussed

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[78] "Police Did Answer Call On Cut Trees." *New York Times*, 3 July 1969, 29.

[79] David Bird, "Trees in a Queens Park Cut Down as Vigilantes Harass Homosexuals." *New York Times*, 1 July 1969, 1, 29.

[80] David Bird, "Deviates Defoliated: Prancing Park Pruned; Play Periled," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 1 July 1969, 49. This is a shorter version of the *New York Times* story above, "Trees in a Queens Park Cut Down as Vigilantes Harass Homosexuals."

[81] Bird, "Tree in a Queens Park Cut Down," 29.

[82] David Bird, "2d Witness Tells of the Park Tree-Cutting," *New York Times*, 4 July 1969, 25.

[83] Bird, "Trees in a Queens Park Cut Down," 29.

[84] "Arboreal Vandals in Queens." *New York Times*, 7 July 1969, 32.

efforts to change gay behavior from promiscuity to stable relationships.[85] The previously mentioned book review comments on Hoffman's book telling readers "about how homosexuals live today--their incredibly reckless behavior when 'cruising' certain public places for sexual liaison, and their equally incredible frozen, asocial social rituals."[86] Another article raised this framing device in a different way. An "admitted homosexual" was seeking to retain his Department of Defense security clearance. The article reported that an appeals board ordered another hearing to determine "the probability that applicant will continue in the future to engage in sexually perverted conduct."[87] The use of conduct here suggests behavior.

The homosexuality-as-a-police-problem framing device dominated the *Newsweek* article as implied by its headline, "Policing the Third Sex." It quoted an anonymous police inspector as saying: "When we rode herd on the fags, they stayed with their own kind in their own places. They didn't bug the people and the people didn't bug them." *Newsweek* followed that comment with one of their own: "That view, of course, ignores two facts: that homosexuals in the cities are increasing in both numbers and visibility, and that their demands are no longer for simple privacy, but for full legal, economic and social integration."[88] Such framing was also evident in the series of articles already discussed dealing with the park in Queens. It was also found in those articles dealing with the Stonewall Riots.[89] Again, in the *P-I* this framing device was hardly used. This was no doubt due in part to the fact that in the pages of the *P-I*, a local gay and lesbian population did not appear to exist.

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[85] John L. Hess. "Avant-Garde Right at Home in Amsterdam." *New York Times*. 11 Jan. 1969. 11.

[86] Walker.

[87] Charlayne Hunter. "Homosexual Seeks to Retain Security Clearance." *New York Times*. 20 Aug. 1969. 38.

[88] "Policing the Third Sex." 81.

[89] See for example. "4 Policemen Hurt in 'Village' Raid." *New York Time*. 29 June 1969. 33; "Police Again Rout 'Village' Youths." *New York Time*. 30 June 1969. 22; and "Hostile Crowd Dispersed Near Sheridan Square." *New York Time*. 3 July 1969. 19.

The framing device of homosexuality-as-a-political problem was also suggested in the *Newsweek* quote above referring to the demand by the gay and lesbian minority for full legal, economic and social integration. Perhaps the most amusing example was in a brief article in the *P-I* reporting on the testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee by the head of the Single Persons Tax Reform, Dorothy Shinder. She told the committee that the "homosexual problem" in her hometown of San Francisco was making it tough for the single girl. "For every two men who 'have each other,' there are two of us straight women who are left pining for love and affection. This has a devastating, frustrating and demoralizing effect on single women."[90] This framing device was further suggested in the long article on lesbianism in the *New York Times*, particularly in the lead, which also appeared in the *P-I*. It said, "The young homosexual woman, to an increasing degree, is refusing to live with the limitations and restrictions imposed by society and is showing a sense of active resentment and rebellion at a condemnation she considers unwarranted and unjust." It was accompanied in the *New York Times* with a photo of lesbians and gay men picketing in Washington, DC. The ideas of picketing and "resentment and rebellion" all suggested the framing device of homosexuality-as-a-political problem This device appeared often in the *New York Times* in articles discussing changes or proposed changes in laws in Canada, West Germany and the Netherlands. It also appeared in articles calling for changes in laws in the United States, particularly in New York, as well as in reports of actual changes in interpretation of existing regulations by the courts or other regulatory bodies. For example, the story on changes in Connecticut law opened this way: "A bill ending penalties for homosexual acts between consenting adults was approved today by the State House of Representatives."[91] The *P-I* did not cover any of these stories, although this framing device surfaced in several of the columns and commentaries. For example, in the one headlined "Is Homosexuality a Disease or Not?" the legalization of "private homosexual acts between consenting adults" was discussed.

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[90] "A Single Girl's Lament." *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 4 March 1969, A.

[91] John Darnton, "Hartford Supports Homosexuality Bill." *New York Times*, 3 June 1969, 43.

Homosexuality-as-a-prison problem was generally reported and discussed as a separate issue, although it was presented several ways. One *New York Times* article noted that while New York City would no longer bar gay men and lesbians from city jobs, it reported they probably would not be allowed to guard prisoners nor work with children.[92] Other *New York Times* articles tended to avoid the term homosexuality and used such terms as "sex perversion and sadism,"[93] sexual molestation,[94] sexual attacks,[95] and deviant sex.[96] A local story in the *P-I* reported that nine men were facing morals charges for what happened between "tough criminals" and "young inmates."[97] All these examples, of course, were homosexual in nature because they took place in the all-male environment of prisons and jails. In the *P-I*, however, the issue was usually more clearly put in homosexual terms. For example, both Bob Consodine[98] and Lester Kinsolving[99] discussed the possibility of marital sex inside prisons in their respective columns. Consodine wrote: "Reason: The mounting rise in homosexuality within the state's prison system and the soaring costs of trying to curb it." Another *P-I* article used terms such as homosexual practices, homosexual attacks, and homosexual assaults in prison when discussing the issue.[100]

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[92] "City Lifts Job Curb For Homosexuals." *New York Times*, 9 May 1969, 1, 23.

[93] "State Reformatories for Juveniles Are Schools for Crime, Bodell Testifies." *New York Times*, 8 July 1969, 27.

[94] "Dr. Sheppard Alleges 'Sadistic' Prison Treatment." *New York Times*, 9, July 1969, 22.

[95] Lawrence Van Gelder, "Guard Is Arrested In Rikers I. Abuses." *New York Times*, 23 Dec. 1969, 1, 39.

[96] "Sexual Activity in Prison Studied, *New York Times*, 7 July 1969, 33.

[97] "Nine Face Morals Charges." *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 23 May 1969, 3.

[98] Bob Considine, "Marital Sex Inside Prison Walls." *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 24 Feb. 1969, 9.

[99] Lester Kinsolving, "Sex - The Primary Prison Problem." *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 14 Sept. 1969, 20.

All of these examples were simply elements of the overall framing device of homosexuality-as-a-problem, which dominated the articles in this study.

Homosexuality as maladjustment. The term maladjustment was used here for the lack of a better term. It was taken from a sentence in the conclusion of the lengthy *Time* magazine article which stated: "While homosexuality is a serious and sometimes crippling maladjustment, research has made clear that it is no longer necessary or morally justifiable to treat all inverts as outcasts."[101] This framing device was characterized by this statement of Rabbi Lamim from the long article on lesbianism in the *New York Times*, which also appeared in the *P-I*: "Homosexuality between consenting adults should not be treated as a criminal offense, but to declare homosexual acts as morally neutral and at times as a good thing is scandalous."[102] It was the idea that homosexuality could not be accepted as normal. It must be some kind of maladjustment. The idea that it could be normal does get floated occasionally in the debate, usually from gay men and lesbians, who had an obvious ax to grind on the issue. Rolf Stromberg in a column in the *P-I* discussed normalcy and the arts. He wrote, "On a slightly lesser scale this society of ours does have homosexuals, who by their lights are perfectly normal."[103] The implication was most others would not define gay men and lesbians as normal. Defining what was normal depended on who did the defining. Ann Landers responded to a letter from a transvestite whose wife accused him of being homosexual. Landers' response stated: "Transvestites are not necessarily homosexuals, but normal they ain't."[104] Her implication was clearly that homosexuals were not either. In another response to a mother concerned that her daughter was a lesbian, she replied, "Individuals who are interested in deviant sexual behavior find one another."[105] What was clear in this coverage, was that gay men and lesbians were consistently defined as not being normal. They were characterized as unhappy,[106] bizarre,[107] sinner,[108] queer,[109] feminine (gay men),[110] immoral, [111] sexually deviant,[112] sexually perverted,[113] undesirably handicapped,[114] etc.

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[100] "Teary-eyed Prisoner Details 'Brutal' Life, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 4 March 1969, 1.

[101] "The Homosexual: Newly Visible, Newly Understood," 66.

[102] Nemy.

[103] Rolf Stromberg, "Normalcy(?) And the Arts, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 25 Jan. 1969, 8.

[104] Ann Landers, "Man in Wig Needs Help," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 11 March 1969, 14.

Such references abounded in the articles in this study. They emphasized that gay men and lesbians were different, that they were maladjusted sexually and morally. Even the two essays by gay writer Donn Teal, who argued for happy endings in the portrayals of gay men and lesbians in entertainment, used this framing device. Teal, writing under the pseudonym here of Ronald Forsythe, wrote:

> But as long as "they lived happily ever after" cannot be tolerated for two amorous homosexuals in any of the better novels, plays, films, operas, art, in song or on television, perhaps many gay love affairs will end in murderous violence, the desperation of suicide, trans-sexualism, free-for-all orgies, or endless sexual

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[105] Ann Landers, "She's Worried By Friendship," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 7 Oct. 1969, 17.

[106] "The Homosexual: Newly Visible, Newly Understood," 64.

[107] "Ibid.," 56.

[108] Walter Allen, "Our Great Thinker of Dangerous Thoughts," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer Northwest Today*, 15 June 1969, 8.

[109] "Buckley Sues Vidal for a Million," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 15 Aug. 1969, A.

[110] Ginott.

[111] "City Lifts Job Curb For Homosexuals."

[112] "Bisexual Leanings Are Called No Bar To U.S. Citizenship," *New York Times*, 1 March 1969, 33.

[113] Hunter.

[114] "Homosexuality: Coming to Terms," 82.

> searchings along Central Park West. To those who would call such alternatives immoral, we say: Give us the rewards for morality, and we will be moral.[115]

Teal was less strident four months later when reviewed the recording of *The Boys in the Band*, which he characterized as a "distorted picture of a subcutlure." However, his discussion of that "distorted picture" still served to raise this framing devise as the article's headline, "How Anguished Are Homosexuals?" suggested.[116] Other examples from the *New York Times* included this article reporting on Amsterdam where the reporter wrote, "It is a city that has the reputation, a bit exaggerated, of having become a new Sodom, the world's mecca for homosexuals."[117] Another article stated that the laws against homosexual relations between consenting adults were being recommended for repeal because "government power should not be used to enforce 'purely moral or religious standards.'"[118] Another article discussed a bisexual man's "private deviate sexual practices" and described it as "compulsive behavior."[119] Another article reported that there was no federal law prohibiting a homosexual from holding a federal job. However, there was a regulation that barred employment for "immoral conduct," and homosexuality was regarded as immoral conduct--Catch 22.[120]

Examples from the *P-I*, included this headline about the vigilante action in the Queens Park, "Deviates Defoliated: Prancing Park Pruned; Play Periled." The Bob McCausland illustration that went with it sketched a limp-wristed, effeminate man in the glare of a flashlight. (It is reproduced on the front cover.)[121] An article on the new permissiveness noted that since Illinois had repealed the laws against homosexual activity between consenting adults but not against adultery, "Illinois now makes a crime of 'normal' sexual intercourse in many instances but never of 'deviant' behavior."[122] Stromberg noted in a review of *Midnight Cowboy*, "The life they lead is foul: Voight is so desperate he lets himself be picked up by homosexuals." Would this have the same meaning if it was turned around, substituting heterosexuals for homosexuals? There were many more examples in both newspapers studied.

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[115] Ronald Forsythe. "Why can't 'We' Live Happily Ever After, Too." *New York Times*, 23 Feb. 1969, II 1, 17.

[116] Donn Teal. "How Anguished Are Homosexuals?" *New York Times*. 1 June 1969. 23.

[117] Hess

[118] Peter Kihss. "Repeal of Laws on Morals Urged." *New York Times*. 13 Feb. 1969. 28.

[119] Bisexual Leanings Are Called No Bar to U.S. Citizenship. *New York Times*. 1 March 1969. 33.

[120] "City Lifts Job Curb For Homosexuals."

[121] Bird. "Deviates Defoliated."

Homosexuality as a threat to society. The first *Time* article noted that a CBS-TV poll found that a majority of Americans considered "homosexuality more dangerous to society than abortion, adultery or prostitution."[123] What may be the same poll was cited in a column in the *P-I*, which noted: "According to a Louis Harris poll released last month, more than 60 per cent of the population still considers homosexuality a threat to the American way of life. The entertainment industry continues to treat homosexuality as an unsafe (although profitable) issue."[124] The long article on lesbianism (and this section appeared in the *P-I* version as well) in the *New York Times* also cited a recent Louis Harris poll "that 63 per cent of the nation believes that homosexuals are 'harmful to American life.'"[125] The second, long *Time* article began one section this way: "A more elusive question is whether or to what extent homosexuality and acceptance of it may be symptoms of social decline." It then discussed Greek and Roman history and how homosexuality became more prevalent as these cultures decayed. Then it made this statement: "Sexual deviance of every variety was common during the Nazi's virulent and corrupt rule of Germany." The Nazis abhorred homosexuality and sent homosexuals to concentration camps,[126] yet this article tied them together insinuating some type of cause-and-effect relationship. Later, *Time* stated:

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[122] Richard Boeth. "The New Permissiveness." *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. 20 Feb. 1969. B.

[123] "Homosexuality: Coming to Terms."

[124] Massett.

[125] Nemy.

> Still, the acceptance or rejection of homosexuality does raise questions about the moral values of the society: its hedonism, its concern with individual 'identity.' The current conception of what causes homosexuality also poses a fundamental challenge to traditional ideas about the proper role to be played by all men and women.[127]

In other words, what kind of threat was homosexuality to American society.

This was the most blatant example, but there were numerous others. For example, the overview article in *Look* quoted psychiatrist Joel Fort saying, "The right-wing militants are equating homosexuality, the hippie movement, drugs, sex education, etc., as a Communist plot. They feel it undermines their concept of traditional American values and seek to attack homosexuals."[128] *Newsweek* noted that law-enforcement officials "still see the gay community as a well of criminal activity."[129] A more subtle example was the entire coverage of the Queens park incident where the vigilantes "'concerned for the safety of the women and children,' decided to move against the homosexuals."[130] Another way this device was raised was in terms of the growing influence of the homophile movement, which was characterized as "militant"[131] and a "rebellion."[132] Such terms suggested a threat to society. This framing device was also raised when it was argued that gay men and lesbians were security risks as it is in an article about an "admitted homosexual" appealing the loss of his security clearance.[133] It was more subtly raised every time the issue of the illegality of homosexual relations was discussed. Conduct is generally considered to be a threat to society if it is made illegal. The fact that much of the coverage of this aspect concerned efforts to legalize it does not take away from the fact that this framing device was there because it was still coupled with the homosexuality-as-a-problem and the homosexuality-as-a-maladjustment framing devices. Law enforcement was difficult because entrapment was largely ruled illegal and there was a growing drive to get away from legislating morality.[134] At the same time the idea that gay men and lesbians were maladjusted and possibly mentally ill did not serve to counter the idea they were no threat to society just because some wanted to remove the legal proscription to same-sex sexual activity.

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[126] See Richard Plant, *The Pink Triangle: The Nazi War Against Homosexuals* (Henry Holt: New York, 1986). The pink triangle was the symbol worn by homosexuals in the Nazi concentration camps. It is now worn as a symbol of gay and lesbian liberation.

[127] "The Homosexual: Newly Visible, Newly Understood."

[128] Star.

[129] "Policing the Third Sex."

[130] Bird, "Trees in a Queens Park." 29.

[131] Massett; see also "The Homosexual: Newly Visible, Newly Understood." 56.

[132] Nemy.

Homosexuality as a lifestyle. Finally, the simple fact that homosexuality was being discussed in the mainstream press meant that it was also being framed as a lifestyle shared by millions[135]. It was acknowledged that gay men and lesbians had their own social life[136] and organizations.[137] And occasionally the voices of gay men and lesbians appeared in print, although hardly at all in the *P-I* save for a couple of letters to Ann Landers from troubled teenagers, who were fearful that they were homosexual, and a couple of quotes in "Lesbians Fight Back," the first third of the much longer *New York*

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[133] Hunter.

[134] For examples see "Policing the Third Sex;" "Homosexuality: Coming to Terms;" and the ending of this story which discusses enforcement problems in the United States: Jay Walz, "Broad Criminal-Code Changes Voted by Canadian Commons" *New York Times*, 16 May 1969, 1, 17.

[135] Estimates ranged from 4 million in "The Homosexual: Newly Visible, Newly Understood," to 15 million in Massett.

[136] See for example: "Four Lives in the Gay World;" Star; Hess; and Nemy;

[137] See for example: "The Homosexual: Newly Visible, Newly Understood," 56; Nemy; Massett; and Hunter.

Times article on lesbianism. The rest of that *New York Times* article had extensive quotes from lesbians. For example, an executive of the Student Homophile League was quoted as saying the organization's purpose was "to educate homosexuals that they have nothing to hide and to educate heterosexuals what it means to be discriminated against for something so minor as sexual orientation."[138] This entire article was really about homosexuality as a lifestyle as were most of the other broad overview articles, particularly those in *Time* and *Look*. The two previously discussed essays by Donn Teal in the *New York Times* also framed homosexuality as a lifestyle. The acknowledgment in this coverage that gay men and lesbians existed, were organized, had a social life, had leaders, demonstrated, and were talked about as a group or a subculture, no matter what the context, established the framing device of homosexuality as a lifestyle.

CONCLUSION

The framing of the news coverage about homosexuality in the articles in this study painted a picture of a group of maladjusted men and women who had developed a lifestyle that was a potential threat to society and therefore a problem for that society -- a mental health problem, a behavioral problem, a police problem, a political problem, a prison problem.

This framing, to a large degree, was the result of some of the traditional assumptions and characteristics of news, although less obvious than in the Voland study because so many of the articles surveyed in this study, including most of those in the *P-I*, were by nature commentary, and therefore not subject to all the assumptions and characteristics of straight news reporting. Furthermore, gay men and lesbians were often not participants in the debate, but were being debated about by others. As a result, some of this framing was simply the result of underlying assumptions agreed upon by all players in the story to include the writer. So much of the framing device of homosexuals-as-maladjusted is the result of this type of underlying assumption. The debate, if there was one, was generally over the type or degree of maladjustment or what to do about it, i.e., the problem of homosexuality. Even gay writer Don Teal in his two *New York Times* essays contributed to the framing device of homosexuality-as-maladjustment. The voices that argued normalcy were few, and usually gay or lesbian, which, as players with a stake in the outcome, gave less legitimacy to their arguments. Instead, greater weight was given to expert sources, particularly those that claimed psychiatric or psychological insight. What was ignored was that these too had a stake in the outcome because they often earned at least part of their incomes from treating homosexuals and sometimes writing books about them, and they also had a professional stake in seeing their views accepted..[139] But the debate was seldom between the experts and gay men and lesbians. It was much more often a debate between the experts, or simply a summary of what the writer decided were the various expert opinions. Such reliance on expert sources is a traditional characteristic of news, which greatly influenced the way homosexuality was framed in the news of 1969.

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[138] Nemy, "The Women Homosexual."

In the straight news reporting found largely in the *New York Times*, the traditional characteristics and assumptions about news were of greater influence in how this issue was framed. The most influential of these characteristics was the reliance upon the rituals of objectivity--the presentation of conflicting possibilities, the presentation of supporting evidence, the judicious us of direct quotations as further support, and the structuring of the evidence to reflect importance.[140] Gitlin's traditional assumptions about news--news is about the event, the person, conflict, and facts that advance the story--also influenced these framing devices.[141] But even here, the relative invisibility of the voices of gay men and lesbians also influenced the framing.

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[139] For example Dr. Charles Socarides. See Nemy; Walker; and Martin Duberman, *About Time: Exploring the Gay Past*, revised and expanded (Meridian: New York, 1991) 313-341.

[140] Tuchman, "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual," 660.

For example, in the many stories about the incident in the Queens Park, a member of the gay community is quoted only once, at the very end of the second story: "At the Mattachine Society, Inc., of New York, an organization for homosexuals, the executive director, Dick Leitsch, called the cutting 'outrageous.' He said his organization was starting a fund to replace the trees."[142] The placement of this quote at the end gave it little value, nor was the idea of the fund to replace the trees ever followed up on in any of the later news stories, which could have given a different framing to this coverage. Instead this coverage assumed gays actually used the park, and that such usage was some kind of threat. That assumption was never contested. The story was framed as an overreaction coupled with apparent police inaction against the vigilantes in their conflict with gay men, who were viewed as a threat to the neighborhood. The coverage, as Gitlin would argue, was about an event not its underlying conditions. It focused on conflict, supported the coverage with supporting evidence and quotes, and used position to indicate importance. Both the quotes from the one gay source and from the woman who challenged the need to protect women and children at 1-o'clock in the morning were at the end of their respective articles. The writers was interested in advancing the story of the vigilante action not explaining why it happened. They were not interested in the underlying conditions. If they were, the coverage of this issue would have focused on why gay men were using the park late at night, if indeed they were, which was never established. Such a focus would then have had to examine the societal pressures and prejudices that drove men to seek anonymous sex in the middle of the night. This would have produced an entirely different framing of the issue of homosexuality.

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[141] Gitlin. 27-28.

[142] "Queens Resident Says the Police Stood By as Park Trees Were Cut."

A similar analysis could be made for the *New York Times'* coverage of the Stonewall Riots, which barely acknowledged any homosexual context. The lead of the first story stated: "Hundreds of young men went on a rampage in Greewich Village shortly after 3 A.M. yesterday after a force of plaincolthes men raided a bar that the police said was wellknown for its homosexual clientele."[143] There were no other references to homosexuals in the story. Compare this to the lead in *Village Voice* story: "Sheridan Square this weekend looked like something from a William Burroughs novel as the sudden specter of "gay power" erected its brazen head and spat out a fairy tale the likes of which the area has never seen."[144] This story did a much better job of probing the underlying conditions that caused the riot than the *New York Times* story, which chose to frame the issue as one of conflict between "Village" youths and the police.

By examining these event in light of the illegality of same-sex activity, the open discrimination against gay men and lesbians, and the general abhorrence society had for them could have led to a very different framing of these stories--that of society as the cause of such activity. But as Gitlin pointed out, one of the characteristics of news is that "editors and reporters reproduce the dominant ideological assumptions prevailing in wider society." Although it was beyond the scope of this study to determine the dominant assumptions about homosexuality in society in 1969, the polls cited in some of the stories discussed here would indicate the framing of homosexuality did reproduce that ideology. As *Time* magazine reported:

> A poll taken for CBS-TV not long ago revealed that two out of three Americans look on homosexuals with disgust, discomfort or fear, and one out of ten regards them with outright hatred. A majority considers homosexuality more dangerous to society than abortion, adultery or prostitution.[145]

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[143] "4 Policemen Hurt in "Village' Raid."

[144] Truscott.

[145] "Homosexuality: Coming to Terms."

In summary, it is argued that the underlying assumptions and characteristics of news influenced the framing of the issue of homosexuality in the mainstream media studied here. This framing characterized gay men and lesbians as a group of maladjusted men and women who had developed a lifestyle that was a potential threat to society and therefore a problem for that society -- a mental health problem, a behavioral problem, a police problem, a political problem, a prison problem. As was suggested with both the coverage on the Queens Park and the Stonewall Riots, it would be possible to frame the issue in other ways.

Although this framing may not have been to the liking of gay men and lesbians in 1969, the conspiracy of silence about them had been broken. As Weiss and Schiller wrote in *Before Stonewall*:

> This unprecedented interest by the straight world served to decrease gay people's isolation. Here was their subculture (at least photographically recognizable aspects) on newsstands across the country. What was perhaps shocking and repelling to the general public actually gave great hope to homophile activists as well as to isolated gay people in small-town America. They understood that although it was "experts" and not gay people themselves speaking, the silence was at last finally broken.[146]

After the Stonewall Riots, there was an "explosive growth" in the gay community and in its political activism.[147] The role of the mass media in this growth and in the public debate about the role of gay men and lesbians in society still needs to be studied.

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[146] Weiss and Schiller, 56.

[147] D'Emilio, "Gay Politics and Community," 468.

Appendix 1

HEADLINE	DATE,1969	PAGE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Newsweek:			
Policing the Third Sex	10/27	76	Relationships of gays with police
Look			
The Faces of the Boys in the Band	12/2	62-67	Photo essay of *Boys in the Band* cast
A Changing View of Homosexuality	12/2	68	An overview article related to the above
Time			
Homosexuality: Coming to Terms	10/24	82	The Hooker report
The Homosexual: Newly Visible, Newly Understood	10/31	56-66	Lengthy overview article
Four Lives in the Gay World	10/31	62	A related article to the above
A Discussion: Are Homosexuals Sick?	10/31	67-68	A related article to the above
New York Times			
Avant-Garde Right at Home in Amsterdam	1/11	11	Discussed homosexuality in Amsterdam
Dutch Legislators Support Protest by Homosexuals	1/22	12	Short article on attempts to change law about gays
Dutch Parliament Rebuffs Homosexual Organization	1/23	13	Short article on effort to give legal recognition to a gay organization
Repeal of Laws on Morals Urged	2/13	28	Called for change in NY laws on gay sexual practices
Why Can't 'We' Live Happily Ever After, Too?	2/23	II, 1,17	Long essay by a gay writer on the portrayal of gays in the arts
Oops, Sorry	3/2	II, 17	Brief correction to this story
Bisexual Leanings Are Called No Bar To U.S. Citizenship	3/1	33	Court case on granting US citizenship to gays
Liberals Oppose Abortion and Marijuana Laws	3/3	40	Mentions liberals oppose laws banning gay sexual practices
The Gay World and The Overt Homosexual	3/9	VII, 30	Review of these two books
Living happily Ever After?	3/16	II, 13	Nine letters about 2/23 essay
Sex in Film and Play Put to the Courts	3/26	37	Lawsuit promised in censoring of *The Killing of Sister George*
Sister George Bows to Censor	3/27	53	The 3/26 lawsuit abandoned
Why a Fake Name?	4/13	II, 14	Letter responding to one of the letters of 3/16
The Gay World	4/20	VII, 14-15	Letter and response on the 3/9 book review
City Lifts Job Curb for Homosexuals	5/9	1, 23	NYC agrees homosexuality is no longer a bar to employment
Bundestag Votes Penal Reforms; Ends Most Sex-Crime Penalties	5/10	1,5	West Germany drops laws banning same-sex sexual contact
Broad Criminal-Code Changes Voted by Canadian Commons	5/16	1,17	Canada legalizes some homosexual acts
How Anguished Are Homosexuals?	6/1	II, 23	Review of recording of *Boys in the Band* by a gay writer
Hartford Supports Homosexuality Bill	6/3	43	Connecticut legalizes homosexual acts between consenting adults
Advertising: Thompson Joins Public Ranks	6/3	76	Notes term "homosexual" will be used in a movie ad for first time
4 Policemen Hurt in 'Village' Raid	6/29	33	Report on Stonewall Riots
Police Again Rout 'Village' Youths	6/30	22	Report on Stonewall Riots
Trees in a Queens Park Cut Down as Vigilantes Harass Homosexuals	7/1	1	Vigilantes cut down trees in a Queens park where gays gathered
Queens Resident Says the Police Stood By as Park Trees Were Cut	7/2	38	Follow-up on Queens Park incident
Hostile Crowd Dispersed Near Sheridan Square	7/3	19	Short report on Stonewall Riots
Police Did Answer Call on Cut Trees	7/3	29	Follow-up on Queens Park incident
Vigilante Vandalism	7/3	30	Letter on Queens Park incident
2d Witness Tells of Park Tree-Cutting	7/4	24	Follow-up on Queens Park incident
Attitudes on Violence	7/5	18	Letter on Queens Park incident
Arboreal Vandals in Queens	7/7	32	Short editorial on Queens Park incident
State Reformatories for Juveniles Are Schools for Crime, Bodell Testifies	7/8	27	Testimony at Congressional Hearing on prison problem
Dr. Sheppard Alleges 'Sadistic' Prison Treatment	7/9	22	Testimony at Congressional Hearing on prison problem
Police Continuing Inquiry on Trees	7/16	50	Follow-up on Queens Park incident
Sexual Activity in Prison Studied	7/20	33	New York state legislative committee working on prison problem
Homosexual Seeks to Retain Security Clearance	8/20	38	Gay man fights to keep DOD security clearance
Inquiries Still Open In Tree Chopping at Park in Queens	9/18	49	Follow-up on Queens Park incident
Study Group Urges U.S. to Ease Laws Concerning Homosexuals	10/21	32	Short article on the Hooker Report
Doctors in Poll Reject Legalizing Marijuana Sale	11/3	37	Poll of doctors show they favor legalizing homosexual acts
The Woman Homosexual: More Assertive, Less Willing to Hide	11/17	62	Long overview article on lesbians
Guard Is Arrested In Rikers I. Abuses	12/23	1, 39	Guards and prisoners accused of sodomy
Seattle Post-Intelligencer			
Dr. Thosteson, Your Good Health	1/20	30	Letter concerned about a very feminine grandson
Ann Landers, Selfishness Inside Out	1/23	14	Letter writer nauseated by two male lovebirds
Rolf Stromberg, Normalcy(?) And the Arts	1/25	8	One sentence reference to homosexuality
Ann Landers, She's 18 And In Between	1/30	11	18-year-old sick that she is a lesbian

HEADLINE	DATE, 1969	PAGE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Sixties Soften 'The Sergeant's' Shock	2/7	206, 3	Movie eview
The New Permissiveness	2/20	B	Two paragraphs on homosexuality
'Sister George' Well-acted	2/20	23	Movie review
Ann Landers, Making Room For One More	2/21	23	Letter about girls showering together
The Hangup of Sister George	2/21	206, 18	Photo page of the movie
Bob Considine, Marital Sex Inside Prison Wells	2/24	9	Column on the problems of sex in prison
Ann Landers, Slap-Happy At Drive-In	2/28	25	Worried about a tomboy
A Single Girl's Lament	3/4	A	A brief about the problems of gays for single women
Teary-eyed Prisoner Details 'Brutal' Life	3/4	41	Senate testimony of sexual abuse in prison
Rolf Stromberg, Prison 'Riot' Misses Mark	3/6	WS, 8	Movie, review, brief mention of prison homosexual scene
Ann Landers, Man in Wig Needs Help	3/11	14	Two letters on cross dressing, brief mention of homosexuality
Ann Landers, Two Morals To His Story	4/1	22	Letter on transvestitism, single mention of homosexuality
Playboy of the Midwestern World	4/6	NW, 10	Hugh Hefner denies he is a "fag"
Ann Landers, 17-year-old Has a Problem – He Doesn't Like Girls	4/18	18	Headline summarizes letter
Children's Books Reflect Society's Permissiveness	4/20	NW, 6	Review of a children's book with a homosexual episode
Nine Face Morals Charges	5/23	3	Morals charges filed against nine men at the county jail
Our Great Thinker of Dangerous Thoughts	6/15	NW, 8	Essay on Oscar Wilde
Hollywood's Finest Actor Loses Out to Sex	6/15	NW, 15	Brief mention of *Killing of Sister George*
Denmark Sells It Legally	6/29	23	Commentary on pornography in Denmark
Deviates Defoliated: Prancing Park Pruned, Play Periled	7/1	49	*New York Times* article on the Queens Park
Dr. Sam's Torture	7/9	12	Dr. Sam Sheppard relates his prison experiences
Pearl Buck to Sue Publisher	7/10	A	Brief notes suit over resignation partly because of homosexuality
"Lesbianism May Not Stem From Oedipal Conflict	7/27	21	Psychiatry commentary
Homo Study	7/27	Parade, 4	Short on a planned study of homosexuals in San Francisco
'The Queen' is Not a Drag	7/30	A	Movie review
Rolf Stromberg, 'Cowboy' Is All Spurs	7/31	11	Movie review
Buckley Sues Vidal for a Million	8/15	A	Brief, Buckley called Vidal a "queer"
Tynan's Skin Show Could Spell Trouble	8/31	Today, 3	Profile of Kenneth Tynan; one sentence reference to homosexuality
Ann Landers, News Came As Shock	9/7	WM, 11	Transvestite letter with single mention of homosexuality
Majority Approve	9/14	20	Sex education commentary with single reference to homosexuality
Lester Kinsolving, Sex - The Primary Prison Problem	9/14	20	Commentary on the prison problem
Deviant Child – an Uncomfortable Fact That Must Be Faced	9/23	14	Part of series on parent/teen relations; deals with homosexuality
Ann Landers, She's Worried By Friendship	10/7	17	Mother is worried daughter is a lesbian
Unisex	10/12	NW, 6	Makes it clear it is not about homosexuality
Pornography: The Growing Menace	10/24	B	Couple of brief mentions of homosexuality
Ann Landers, Society Isn't Ready for It	11/4	17	Letter of gay marriages
'Your Own Thing' Not Rock, It's Mush ... BAD Mush	11/22	19	Musical review with brief mention of homosexuals
Lesbians Fight Back	11/23	21	First third or so of the *New York Times* 11/17 story
C.L. Sulzberger, Danes Push Sex 'Honesty'	12/9	4	Mentions gay marriage
Jim Bishop, Nothing Like an Effeminate Dog	12/11	9	Column about 'gay' dog etc
Is Homosexuality a Disease or Not?	12/21	18	Psychology commentary
Ann Landers, Just 'Sort Of Got Married"	12/30	11	Letter on gay marriage

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An experimental test of the agenda-setting function of the press

Paper submitted to the Mass Communication and Society division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication for the annual convention in Kansas City, August 11-14, 1993

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An experimental test of the agenda-setting function of the press

Abstract

Two decades of resarch on the agenda-setting function of the mass media have brought about a huge amount of empirical evidence, both in support and contradiction of the hypothesis.

An important theoretical development lies in the examination of the cognitive foundations of agenda-setting effects. The concepts developed by MacKuen are the foundations of a schema theoretic approach to the study of media agenda-setting.

Experimental research on the agenda-setting effect of television conducted by Iyengar et al. has proved to be a powerful means to study short-term media effects.

A field experiment was conducted to study the short term agenda-setting effects of local newspaper content. After reading different versions of the front page of the local section of a newspaper, subjects showed differences in the rating of intrapersonal and perceived importance of two local issues. The effects are shown to be dependent on the type of issue: they are larger for intrapersonal importance of the obtrusive issue, and for perceived importance of the inobtrusive issue. These differences can be attributed to the mediating influence of cognitive schemata. Direct personal experience with an issue leads to the development of complex schemata which enhance a priming effect brought about by the exposure to the media stimulus. Public perception of an issue is stabilized by the schematic structures, thereby attenuating media influences.

An experimental test of the agenda-setting function of the press

I Theoretical considerations

The agenda-setting function of the mass media has been on the communication research agenda for more than 20 years. Since the early 70ies, several hundred studies have tried to produce evidence for this effect of mass communication. The efforts to isolate agenda-setting effects have not always been successful. Agenda-setting research is characterized by a low degree of theoretical sophistication, as well as little methodological consistency (cf. Swanson, 1988). Taken as a "tool" for the prediction of the impact of media on public opinion, agenda-setting still has to prove that it can predict more than "some effect on some people with some issues some of the time".

AGENDA-SETTING AS A COGNITIVE PROCESS

The 80ies brought some interesting developments in agenda-setting research. MacKuen (1981, 1984) did pioneering work for the formulation of a cognitive psychological foundation of agenda-setting. He proposed a model concerning the role of cognitive sophistication in the agenda-setting process. The basic question is: will a higher level of cognitive organization and integration limit or facilitate potential mass media influences? The model he developed has two components:

1. A higher level of cognitive organization allows the individual to deal more effectively with the symbolic material offered by the media. Therefore, cognitively sophisticated persons will expose themselves to more and more complex media messages, and they will more easily understand those messages. This means a greater *potential* for media effects.

2. Cognitive sophistication means better integration of the cognitive system. The higher the integration of the system, the greater the resistance to change.

McKuen's model can be easily translated into the terms of schema theoretical approaches (cf. Axelrod, 1973; Taylor/Crocker, 1981; Schank/Abelson, 1977). We can look at an "issue" as a special kind of schema, one that integrates events in the social environment into a cohesive whole. By developing issue schemata (Eichhorn, 1986), people are better able to deal with the complex processes in the political and economic spheres of society. By linking events to issue schemata, the interrelations between these processes do not have to be evaluated in a piecemeal fashion. Once an event is identified as relating to a certain issue, existing schematic structures can be used to categorize and evaluate that event. Higher schematic integration makes it easier to deal with the social environment, since information about it can be processed in a more effective way. On the other hand, highly integrated schemata are resistant to external influences (Taylor/Crocker, 1981). Conceptualizing issues as schemata leads us to the same conclusion about the influence process that McKuen reached: there is no simple relationship between cognitive organization and the potential of media effects on issue salience.

A study by Demers et al. (1989) produces more evidence that makes the proposal of a schematic basis for issues plausible. They compared an *obtrusiveness model* with a *cognitive priming* model of agenda-setting. Obtrusiveness (cf. Zucker, 1978) indicates the level of involvement of a person with an issue. Issues that deal with spheres of the social environment that concern a person directly are obtrusive. Issues that are far away from the direct social environment are unobtrusive. The obtrusiveness model states that direct experience will act as a mediating factor in the agenda-setting process, reducing media effects. The alternative, a cognitive priming model, predicts the opposite effect: By bringing an issue to the attention of an individual, media agenda-setting is facilitated, since the information about a particular subject is more readily accessible (for the link between accessibility and salience of a psychogical construct cf. Wyer, 1980, Taylor/Fiske, 1978). Demers et al. found that their research produced more support for a cognitive priming model.

While we are considering alternative models of agenda-setting, we should be aware of different formulations of issue salience. McLeod, Becker and Byrnes (1974) introduced a differentiation of issue salience into

- intrapersonal,
- interpersonal and
- perceived community salience.

While intrapersonal salience is supposed to be a measure of the importance an individual gives to a particular issue, perceived community salience concerns his perception of the importance of this issue given in society. Interpersonal salience is concerned with the frequency a person discusses the issue. These forms of issue salience are quite different concepts. Intrapersonal salience could be looked upon as a form of attitude, perceived community salience as an assessment variable, interpersonal salience as an aspect of behavior. It is plausible that there is not one simple cognitive process involved in the change of these different forms of issue salience.

Usually, agenda-setting-researchers do not differentiate between the terms *salience* and *importance*. It should be noted, however, that in attitude research salience refers to the cognitive accessibility of a construct or attribute (cf. Myers/Alpert, 1977). Salient attributes are not necessarily those held important by an individual. The following study is concerned with issue importance, not salience.

EMPIRICAL APPROACHES TO AGENDA-SETTING

The original agenda-setting study (McCombs/Shaw, 1972) and most of the research that followed relied on survey research methods and content analyses. While this approach is appropriate for studying agenda-setting effects on a macro level, the analysis of individual processes is limited to an ex-post-facto design, which has less explanatory power than experimental research (cf. Kerlinger, 1964, ch. 20,21).

Iyengar, Kinder and associates (Iyengar/Kinder, 1985; Iyengar/Kinder, 1987; Iyengar/Peters/Kinder, 1982) demonstrated that experimental research can be fruitfully employed in agenda-setting research. Instead of conducting a survey to find out about the issue awareness of the public and then trying to link the results to content analyses of mass media, we expose samples of individuals to certain kinds of media content under controlled conditions. With the experimental approach we can actually control which media messages reach the recipients, therefore we can make the valid assumption that any differences between the (randomized) experimental and control groups are due to the differences in the media content they perceived. The results that are achieved in the laboratory are not easily replicated in a "natural environment", but, as Kerlinger (1979) pointed out, the value of experimental research does not lie in its ability to produce results that are easily generalized, but in the isolation of specific effects. The cause and effect relationships that are found in the laboratory may be drowned by alternate influence factors and the "noise" produced by inadequate measurements in an opinion survey, but the assumption that these relationships do exist and influence human thought and behavior is still valid.

The Iyengar et al. studies showed that there are immediate effects of tv content on issue importance ratings by the viewers and that there are associated priming effects that binds agenda-setting effects to processes of political evaluation.

2 An experimental study of agenda-setting

The study presented here was designed to prove the following main hypothesis:

Local newspaper content has a short term effect on the importance attributed to issues of local relevance.

We also assume that the agenda-setting effects will vary according to the obtrusiveness of the issue and the type of importance measured.

We chose local newspaper content as stimulus because it is still the most important medium for political information in Germany, showing considerable impact on political learning (Schönbach, 1983). Furthermore, we wanted to find evidence that the results of Iyengar et al. are not bound to a specific medium.

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

To test the hypothesis, a balanced post-test-only design was used. The basic assumption is that two randomly selected samples of people will show differences in the rating of issue importance of a local issue immediately after reading an article about that issue. We chose the so-called "planted-content" technique introduced by Annis and Meyer (1934).

A single front page of the local section of a newspaper was produced. The layout chosen was similar, but not identical to that of a paper published in Munich (the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*). The contents of the articles were taken from the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* as well. The text of the articles was rewritten to reduce the possibility of a recognition effect. The result was printed out on a 300-dpi laser printer on a A4 (comparable to legal) sized page. The two versions of the newspaper page produced differed only in the main story. Version A had a lead story about a growing crime problem in Munich, version B had a story of equal length about the way the city dealed with the traffic problem. Since Munich has severe problems with automobile traffic and public transportation, traffic can be considered an obtrusive issue. Crime rates in Munich are low, and there is a small chance to find people in a random sample of 60 that actually have fell victim to crime.

The field experiment was conducted in the spring of 1992: 30 participants in an introductory seminar on social research methods at the Institute for Communication Science in Munich each visited two randomly selected experimental subjects in their homes. The "cover" for the experiment was a test of a new local section for a newspaper. Only one of the subjects had doubts about this story (but did not suspect what the actual goal of the study was). The subjects were told to read the page thoroughly and immediately afterwards complete a questionnaire on the contents and layout of the newspaper page. This questionnaire contained a short list of questions on the personal importance and perceived public importance of seven local issues. To check for the possibility of personal experience with the crime issue we included a question that asked if one of the articles read had any special relevance for the respondant. None of the answers indicated that subjects had personal experiences with crime cases. The questionnaire was fully completed by most of the subjects. There was one non-response for one of the issue-ratings. The subjects were debriefed after the questionnaires had been completed.

3 Results

GROUP DIFFERENCES

The experimental design of our study enables us to make valid assumptions about the short term effect of media contents on the measurements of issue importance. Since we used a counterbalanced design, we can use the "traffic group" as a control for the "crime group" and vice versa. We first conduct a simple t-test for the perceived community importance (PCI; table 1) and intrapersonal importance (IPI; table 2) scores. The differences between the two groups are in the expected directions, those respondants who read the article on traffic gave higher ratings for this issue on both the intrapersonal and the perceived community measurements. The same is true for the crime issue. If we look at the p-values, however, we find that only one of the four comparisons proves to be signicant on a 5-percent level (1-tailed probability).

Table 1 about here

Table 2 about here

Furthermore, if we look at the other issues, we find some rather large differences between the groups. Generally, group B showed higher ratings on both the IPI and PCI measures. Since those differences cannot be accounted for by the stimuli or the experimental procedure, we would have to conclude that the groups differ in one or more other variables. We try to account for these differences by using multiple regression to analyse the data.

A MULTIPLE REGRESSION APPROACH

Multiple regression allows us to simultaneously analyse the influence of multiple predictor variables on the dependent variable. The stimulus variable enters the equation in the form of a dummy variable (stimulus present/not present). We then enter, step by step, a number of other factors, which are assumed to influence perceived community importance or intrapersonal importance. The tables 3 through 6 show the final equations for the analyses. The first variables included are two composite indices of overall PCI and IPI, constructed from the importance ratings of all except the two treatment variables. There are no significant differences between the groups for these indices, although the "crime group" shows slightly higher composite ratings for both of the indices (as might be expected from the results in tables 1 and 2). In the next step we introduce the IPI rating into the equation for the PCI score and vice versa. Finally we control for the time it took the subjects to read the page and a number of sociodemographic variables: age, sex and education.

The composite scores were used to control for the variation introduced by individual differences in general interest in public issues. By introducing the PCI-scores into the IPI-equation and vice versa we can check the effects of "cognitive bonding" (cf. Schönbach/Weaver, 1985), a correlation between different parts of the cognitive system, in this case perceived and personal importance. The length of reading time was used under the assumption that the longer the exposure to the article, the stronger its effect should be. The demographic characteristics can be expected to have effects specifically for the crime issue: female as well as older respondants should be more alert to this issue while higher educated subjects should give it a lower importance rating.

PERCEIVED COMMUNITY IMPORTANCE

Introducing the two composite importance indices raises the β for the influence of the stimulus on the perceived community importance rating for the traffic issue from .15 to .24, indicating a medium sized *suppressor effect*. Including the IPI rating in the equation and controlling for reading time and age, sex and education does not change the influence of the stimulus (cf. table 3). The β of .24 is significant at the 5-percent-level. The composite score for intrapersonal issue importance shows the strongest influence on the PCI-rating for traffic (β=.37). Those respondants with a high personal involvement in municipal issues obviously are most sensitive to this issue.

Table 3 about here

We find quite a different picture for the crime issue. Introducing the composite scores does not change the β, which is respectably sized: .36 (cf. table 4). Including the intrapersonal issue importance for crime, however, slightly attenuates the standardized regression coefficient (.32), having itself an effect equal in magnitude (.31). So, the awareness of crime as a public issue is correlated with the personal importance attached to this issue, while this is not the case for traffic problems. Introducing the other controls does not change this picture in a great degree. All the other variables have only small regression coefficients.

Table 4 about here

INTRAPERSONAL ISSUE IMPORTANCE

Applying the same procedure to the intrapersonal issue ratings once again produces a suppressor effect for the traffic issue. Including the composite issue scores raises the β of the stimulus from .21 to .32 (cf. table 5). The composite score for intrapersonal importance shows a strong effect, with a β of .48 in the final equation. The other control variables have little effect. There is no effect from the perceived community importance for that issue, but there is a considerable impact of reading time, indicating that the more quickly the page was read, the higher the importance attached to the traffic issue. This is contrary to our original assumption. It might be due to the fact that people who scanned the paper quickly spent more time with the main story (the traffic story in this case). But since we have no separate measurement of reading time of each article, there is no evidence to support this assumption. Also, it does not explain the absence of a reading time effect in the other three equations.

Table 5 about here

The final analysis produces only a negligable effect of the stimulus on the intrapersonal importance rating for the crime issue. The importance attached to that issue is largely governed by its perception as a public problem (the perceived community importance) and the sex of the respondant (cf. table 6). The second result is not surprising: women are usually more sensitive to the crime issue. In a separate analysis (not shown) we found that there is no interaction between sex and stimulus: although women have higher personal importance scores for the crime issue, they do not react to the stimulus in a different way.

Table 6 about here

4 Discussion

In our study we found evidence for short term agenda-setting effects of local newspapers for locally relevant issues. These effects however, are not uniform in the sense of an unconditional reaction to a stimulus. There are influences which work in conjunction with the stimulus variable, shaping it, sometimes augmenting, at other times attenuating. The effect patterns that we found show clear differences for the two issues of crime and municipal traffic. We can hypothesize that this is due to the fact that media influences on issue importance are modified by the way that the issues are perceived before the media have an impact.

The difference in correlational patterns between perceived community importance and intrapersonal issue importance leads us to the question of the cognitive bases of agenda-setting effects. The traffic issue showed much higher ratings for both kinds of issue importance. Here, the PCI was independent of the IPI, while there was a strong correlation between the types of issue importance for the crime issue. This is probably a result of the much higher degree of personal experience the respondants had with the traffic issue. These personal experiences enable them to form a personal opinion independent of the perceived importance attached to that issue. The personal importance attached to the crime issue, however, is mainly governed by the opinion that crime is a severe public problem, because there is no direct personal experience available. If we use our results to interpret the structure of the issue schemata involved, we have to conclude that the elements of the more "sophisticated" issue schema are independent of each other, while the lesser developed schema seems more coherent. At the first look, this does not sound plausible. But if we consider that higher developed schemata are more differentiated than simple schemata, the conclusion that they also should allow a high degree of independece of cognitive and attitudinal elements seems permittable.

While the PCI of the crime issue was changed dramatically by the stimulus, there was almost no effect on the IPI. With the traffic issue, it was the other way around: the effect was stronger for the IPI than the PCI. Once again, prior personal experience leading to schema development might be the key factor. Reading about traffic problems should have triggered scripts in the cognitive system of the respondants, who probably all had negative experiences with automobile traffic or public transportation. For the crime issue, however, there were no scripts, since there is only a relatively small chance to become a victim of crime in Munich. Reading about crime, however, does change its perception as a public problem, since the newspaper serves as a main source for information about public opinion. The PCI for traffic was less strongly influenced, the stored personal experience here acting as an attenuating factor.

Figure 1 about here

We come to the conclusion that the way personal experience with an issue is stored in a person's memory can have a quite large differential effect on how important this issue is rated. Personal experience will have a cognitive "resonance effect", media stimuli triggering stored cognitive scripts, getting the issue to the "top of the heap" of attention. The opposite will be the case for the public perception of the problem (cf. figure 1).

THE ROLE OF OBTRUSIVENESS

Our results suggest that obtrusiveness can be a key factor in shaping media effects on issue importance, because it coincides with the development of issue schemata.

Intrapersonal importance depends on personal experiences with issues. These experiences can be direct or transmitted by the mass media. It is plausible to assume that direct experiences have a larger impact than mediated experiences. The experiences will leave a trace of cognitive schemata or scripts. If the issue has relevance for a person, there will be a trend toward higher organization of the schemata.

What happens when a person is asked about the personal importance of a particular issue? She will identify the issue, and the appropriate schema in the cognitive system will be triggered. The person will try to match her estimate of personal importance to the scale given on the questionnaire.

If the person has just read about the issue in question like in our experiment, the appropriate schemata will already be available, having been activated just a few minutes ago to deal with the media content. Since the issue schema is more readily available than in a case of no recent activation, the person will have the impression of higher personal importance. Availability of the appropriate issue schema is one determinant of importance.

This process will be mediated by the level of organization of the issue in question. If there has been a lot of experience, the issue will be more relevant for the respondant and this involvement will interact with the stimulus, augmenting the effect. If there has been little experience, there will be little schema activation when the stimulus is read and the effect will be small. So, we would predict a positive influence of obtrusiveness on media effects on intrapersonal importance.

What about perceived importance? Part of the schema pertaining to a particular issue is the image of the way that the issue is perceived by an individual's social environment. This picture is stable for issues where the level of information is high. Perceiving a newspaper article about a particular issue will more easily change the perception of the public importance for an issue that is out of the range of personal experience, where schema development is at a low level of integration. So, media effects on perceived importance should be weakened by high obtrusiveness of an issue.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of our small study match those of earlier experimental evidence by Iyengar et al. There are short term agenda-setting effects of local newspaper content. These effects are obviously mediated by the cognitive organization of issues. Since we did not measure cognitive organization, we cannot draw strict inferences about the interactions involved. But the patterns that we found are in line with MacKuen's concepts concerning the influence of cognitive sophistication, and they can be readily explained by schema theory. Choosing schema theory as a base for a conceptual foundation of individual agenda-setting processes opens new possibilities of theoretical and methodological development for agenda-setting research.

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Tables and figures

Table 1: Perceived community importance ratings for seven issues

Issue	Grand mean	Group A (traffic)	Group B (crime)	Diff. (B-A)	p-value
Environment	3.95	3.84	4.06	+0.22	.293
Housing	4.92	4.71	4.32	-0.39	.051
Political refugees	4.13	4.03	4.23	+0.20	.418
Traffic	**4.00**	**4.16**	**3.83**[a]	**-0.33**	**.090**[b]
Cultural issues	2.52	2.45	2.58	+0.13	.628
Crime	**2.95**	**2.53**	**3.35**	**+0.82**	**.001**[b]
Financial issues	2.77	2.50	3.03	+0.53	.048

Arithmetic means on a 5-point-scale. 1 = unimportant 5 = very important
n: Group A, 31, Group B, 31; except where indicated
a) n = 30
b) p-Value for 1-tail prob.

Table 2: Intrapersonal issue importance ratings for seven issues

Issue	Grand mean	Group A (traffic)	Group B (crime)	Diff. (B-A)	p-value
Environment	4.63	4.68	4.58	-0.10	.535
Housing	4.13	4.23	4.03	-0.20	.523
Political refugees	3.77	3.52	4.03	+0.51	.066
Traffic	**3.87**	**4.06**	**3.68**[a]	**-0.38**	**.092**[b]
Cultural issues	3.52	3.48	3.55	+0.07	.806
Crime	**2.90**	**2.67**	**3.13**	**+0.46**	**.074**[b]
Financial issues	2.42	2.06	2.77	+0.71	.027

Arithmetic means on a 5-point-scale. 1 = unimportant 5 = very important
n: Group A, 31, Group B, 31; except where indicated
a) n = 30
b) p-Value for 1-tail prob.

Table 3: Perceived community issue importance: TRAFFIC

MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Variable	*b*	*β*	*p-value*
Stimulus	.453	.238	.046[a]
PCI index	.076	.183	.201
IPI index	.113	.373	.020
Intrapers. importance	-.044	-.053	.752
Reading time	-.033	-.136	.327
Education	.332	.224	.091
Sex[b]	.066	..034	.790
Age	.003	.035	.799

R = .514 R^2(adj.) = 142
F = 2.16 (DF = 8) p = .047
n(min) = 61
a) p-value for 1-tail-prob.
b) 0 = female, 1 = male

Table 4: Perceived community issue importance: CRIME

MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Variable	*b*	*β*	*p-value*
Stimulus	.683	.326	.007[a]
PCI index	.038	.083	.550
IPI index	-.013	-.038	.783
Intrapers. importance	.330	.348	.017
Reading time	-.007	-.027	.828
Education	.319	.197	.135
Sex[b]	.069	.033	.805
Age	.002	.024	.549

R = .534 R^2(adj.) = 166
F = 2.39 (DF = 8) p = .029
n(min) = 61
a) p-value for 1-tail-prob.
b) 0 = female, 1 = male

Table 5: Intrapersonal issue importance: TRAFFIC

MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Variable	*b*	*β*	*p-value*
Stimulus	**.731**	**.319**	**.004[a)]**
PCI index	.096	.192	.127
IPI index	.173	.476	.000
Perceived community importance	-.048	-.040	.752
Reading time	-.091	-.314	.007
Education	.161	.090	.438
Sex[b)]	.110	.048	.669
Age	-.005	-.053	.654

R = .665 R^2(adj.) = 349
F = 4.76 (DF = 8) p = .000
n(min) = 61
a) p-value for 1-tail-prob.
b) 0 = female, 1 = male

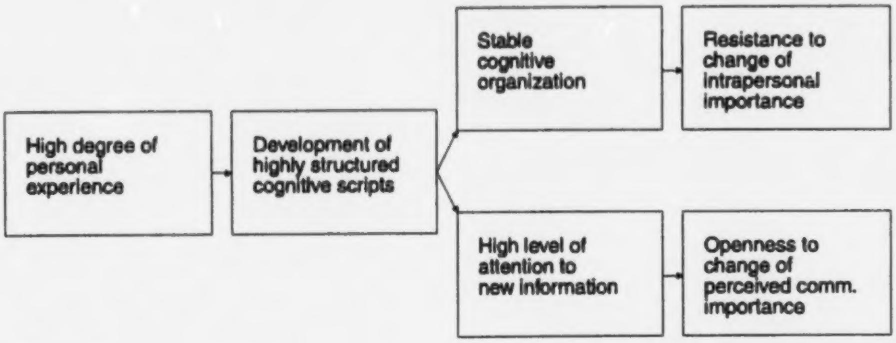
Table 6: Intrapersonal issue importance: CRIME

MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Variable	*b*	*β*	*p-value*
Stimulus	**.055**	**.025**	**.425[a)]**
PCI index	.022	.045	.736
IPI index	.064	.183	.163
Perceived community importance	.343	.325	.017
Reading time	-.003	-.012	.920
Education	-.359	.201	.099
Sex[b)]	-.595	-.269	.032
Age	.010	.102	.431

R = .576 R^2(adj.) = 220
F = 2.98 (DF = 8) p = .009
n(min) = 61
a) p-value for 1-tail-prob.
b) 0 = female, 1 = male

Figure 1:
The influence of personal experience with an issue on intrapersonal and perceived community importance


High degree of personal experience
Development of highly structured cognitive scripts
Stable cognitive organization
Resistance to change of intrapersonal importance
High level of attention to new information
Openness to change of perceived comm. importance

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